Twenty Seven MEDITATIONS

Consisting of

COUNSEL and COMFORT

TO

DIRECT and SUPPORT

CHRISTIANS

Under outward troubles: But especially calculated for the use of those, that were and are great Sufferers by the Fire.

Part IV.

By *Samuel Rolle* Minister of the Word, and sometime Fellow of Trinity Colledge in *Cambridge*.

LONDON,

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst*, *Nathanael Ranew*, and *Jonathan Robinson*, 1667.

Twenty Seven

MEDITATIONS

Calling of

COUNSEL and COMFORT

TO

DIRECT and SUPPORT

CHRISTIANS

Under outward troubles: But Especially

Part IV.

TO THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFULL

Sir *THOMAS ADAMS*

Knight and Baronet.

TO

Sir *FRANCIS BICKLEY*

Knight and Baronet

And to the reſt of the wothy Citizens of the now deſolate (though not deſpairing) City

OF

LONDON

Eſpecially ſuch of them, as either reſide at *Hackney*, or are Governours of Saint *Thomas's* Hoſpital in *Southwark*.

S. R.

A Native of *London*, and true Mourner for the Calamity thereof, in gratitude to ſeveral of them, and in true reſpect to all, dedicateth this moſt Conſolatory part of his Meditations, wiſhing the reparation of all their loſſes in Gods due time; and their compleat Aſſurance of an intereſt in thoſe better things that cannot be loſt.

Mixt Meditations and Discourses of Counsell and Comfort to such as were great sufferers by the firing of *London*.

DISCOURSE I.

Of Deliverance under losses and troubles, as well as out of them.

TO say there is a Deliverance under Losses and Troubles, as well as another out of them, must needs be good sense, because it is good Divinity. The holy Ghost in the Scripture speaks of such a thing, to whom it is impossible to speak either untruly or improperly. It were blasphemy and non-sense to charge him either with falshood or folly, who is Truth and Wisdom its selfe, and the fountain of all that Truth and Wisdom which is dispersed amongst all intelligent creatures. He himself tels us how Christ was heard in the prayers which he made for Deliverance, unto him that was able to save from death. *Heb.* 5. 8. Yet was he not saved from the Cross, intimating thereby, that there is a Deliverance (properly enough so called) under the cross, as well as from under it, else how was Christ heard and delivered as to the cup which

he beg'd might pass from him? *Luke* 22. 42. Which nevertheless he was made to drink, unless his being strengthened to undergoe it, as the next verse tells us, that then there appeared an Angel, from heaven strengthening him: as also his being inabled to triumph over principallities upon the Cross? (as is said *Col.* 2. 15.) might be interpreted an eminent Deliverance vouchsafed him in and upon the Cross. I am mistaken if the Apostle *Paul* in *Rom.* 7. 25. doth not give thanks to God thorough Jesus Christ for delivering him as to the body of Death, which yet he carryed about with him, and therefore was not delivered from but under it, as the foregoing words do shew, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Death? And in 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. the Apostle saith, God is faithful who will with the temptation also make a way to escape (or to be delivered) that ye may be able to bear it; seeming thereby to insinuate that Deliverance and Temptation may stand together, and do so, when a man is not tempted above what he is able, but together with the temptation, hath assistance to bear it. Were not the Israelites delivered in the red Sea, *Jonas* in the great deep and Whales belly? *Daniel* in the Lions den? the three children in the fiery furnace, I say were they not first truly delivered in each of these, as afterwards from and out of them? To be kept under water from drowning and in the midst of fire, from being burnt, is Deliverance with a witness. Had the bush that did burn and was not consumed been presently quencht, or snatcht out of the fire, it had not been so eminently delivered as it was. Deliverances

under

under great troubles though leaſt obſerved by many, are of all others moſt obſervable and Emphaticall: what more admirable promiſe than that *Iſa.* 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt thorough the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee, when thou walkeſt thorough the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* No place can be more pertinent than that is, to prove there is ſuch a thing as Deliverance under trouble: the notion is worth our purſuing, becauſe it is full of Comfort; it opens as it were a new ſpring of conſolation to thoſe that are under trouble which many did overlook before, as *Hagar* did thoſe wells of water which were neareſt to her. Many people have no more joy and comfort than they have hopes of having their loſſes repaired in kind, and their temporal troubles removed, and God knows whether that may ever be, when they themſelves deſpair of it, their hearts faile within them, he that thinks himſelf utterly undone, and that it will not be worth while for him to live, if *London* be not ſuddenly rebuilt, trading ſpeedily reſtored, when theſe things appear unlikely, will be at his wits ends, but he that knows and believes that God (who is onely wiſe) can make him and his happy, though *London* ſhould ſtill lye in aſhes, and trade not revive in many years to come; that God can work a Deliverance for him in and under all publick calamities, and in deſpight of all and every of them, he I ſay will in patience poſſeſſe his ſoul. St. *Pauls* words, 1 *Cor.* 1. 4, are much to be heeded, where he ſaith, *Bleſſed be God who comforteth us in all our Tribulations*; he doth not ſay who delivereth us out of all, but

who comforteth us in all our Tribulations, and what is that but a Deliverance under trouble, when God doth comfort us in it? If there be ſuch a thing as Deliverance under trouble, many may and will rejoyce in the hopes of that, who are paſt all hope (though I think that ſhould not be neither) of ever ſeeing an end of their preſent troubles. They look upon Deliverance out of the preſent calamities to be at ſo great a diſtance, that they think the ſteed will ſtarve whilſt the graſs grows, and their carkaſſes will fall in the wilderneſs, ere the time come for entring into *Canaan*. But now by virtue of the notion I am ſpeaking of, though I ſhould grant men of miſgiving minds, there are as great unlikelyhoods as they can ſuppoſe, that they ſhould ever re-enjoy, ſuch houſes trades, eſtates, conveniencies, as formerly, or any thing comparable thereunto, yet may they live in a dayly expectation of a comfortable Deliverance, with and under thoſe calamities, which are like to continue upon them; that God together with their temptations, will make a way for their eſcape, men ſo perſwaded will be able to ſay with *Habakkuk*, though the fig-tree bloſſome not, and the labour of the *Olive* faile, yet will (or may they) rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of their Salvation. When *Paul* prayed that the Meſſenger of *Sathan*, which buffetted him might depart, God gave him no aſſurance of that, at leaſt-wiſe for the preſent, but yet told him that which ſatisfied him, though that evil meſſenger were likely to continue, namely, that his Grace ſhould be ſufficient for him. The Iſraelites knewthat their captivity

in

in *Babylon* would certainly laſt ſeventy years. Therefore it was not thehopes of a ſpeedy Deliverance from thence, that did bear up the hearts of believers amongſt them, but the hopes they had, that God would be good to them, in and under their captivity, and ſhow them mercy in a ſtrange land. If the *Iſraelites* knew, as it is like they did, that they muſt wander no leſſe than forty years in the wilderneſs, ere they came to *Canaan*, it was the Mercy and Deliverance which they did expect in the wilderneſs, not out of it, during all that time, that did ſupport them; as hoping that in that howling deſert, God would be no wilderneſs or Land of Darkneſs to them. If God ſpread a table for his people in the wilderneſs, if he give them water out of the Rock, and Manna from heaven, are not thoſe things to be reckoned Deliverances (namely from the evils that in ſuch a place, they might expect) though Quailes ſhould be with-held? Though the famine were not removed, yet ſeeing *Elijah* was fed the mean time, though but by *Ravens*, it muſt be acknowledged, that he was delivered in and under famine. If to the righteous there ariſe light in darkneſs, as is promiſed there ſhall, is not that Deliverance? Though *Paul* and *Silas* were in priſon, and their feet in the ſtocks, yet if they were ſo chearful there, as to ſing praiſes to God at midnight, *Acts* 16. 25. was not that a great Deliverance? Surely *Paul* and others of whom he ſpeakes, were greatly delivered, even under chaſtiſement, ſorrow, poverty, and a kind of Death, yea Deaths often, or elſe he could ever ſay as he doth, 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. 10. *As dying*

and behold we live, as ſorrowfull, yet alwaies rejoycing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things; as if he had but the ſhadowes of evill, but the reallity and ſubſtance of good things. He is delivered from death, as to whom the ſting of death is taken away, and he from the noiſome peſtilence who is ſecured, that the evill of it ſhall not come nigh him (which is all that ſeems intended by that promiſe *Pſal* 91. 3. verſe, compared with the tenth) *David* ſomewhere prayes that God would bring his Soul out of trouble, and his Soul out of priſon. The Soul of a man is the man, if that be brought out of trouble, in whole, or in part, though his body, his name, eſtate, relations are yet in trouble, the man himſelf is delivered. A man may be ſick and well at the ſame time (as *Paul* was poor, and yet rich at the ſame time) according to that of the Prophet, the inhabitants ſhall not ſay they are ſick, for their ſins ſhall be forgiven them; a man can be but well in Proſperity, and it may be as well with us, yea and better with us in adverſity, all things conſidered (as *David* ſaith, it was good for him that he was afflicted) and in that caſe is not a man truly delivered even under affliction? It may be God will be more with us in the water and in the fire, than ever he was out of it. As proſpective-glaſſes do repreſent the object near at hand, though it be ſome miles diſtant, ſo may this notion repreſent Deliverance at the very door, or as that which may come the next morning, when ſorrow came but the evening before (*viz.* Deliverance in and under trouble, which may be ſufficient for us) though Deliverance

rance out of trouble, may ſeem as far from us as the *Eaſt* is from the *Weſt*, thus may we hope in one kind whilſt we deſpair in another, and with *Abraham* in hope, beleive even againſt hope. If outward calamity and miſery might not conſiſt with more real happineſs and comfort, than plenty and proſperity had wont to afford, how could that promiſe of Chriſt be fulfilled, that they who forſake all for him, ſhal have a hundred-fold in this life, and yet with perſecution, or in deſpight thereof? Lord if my heart deceive me not, I had rather partake of thoſe Deliverances which many of thy ſervants have had, with and under great and ſore trouble, than of thoſe Deliverances out of trouble into greateſt earthly proſperity, which thou haſt ſometimes vouchſafed to wicked men. Thou who gaveſt to *Paul* and *Silas*, impriſoned and in the ſtocks, ſongs in the night, but didſt make *Belteſhazzer* tremble, and his knees ſmite together in the midſt of his ful cups and jovial company, thou canſt imbitter the beſt of earthly conditions, and ſweeten the worſt. Lord give me rather a bitter cup of thy ſweetning, than a ſweet cup of thy imbittering. As for all the troubles which at this day are upon my ſelf, or any of thy people; if thou wilt never deliver us out of them, thy will be done; but oh faile not in ſuch manner as hath been ſpoken (and how elſe thou pleaſeſt) to ſave and deliver us under them, that experience henceforth, may render it no paradox to me and others, that there is real Deliverance under trouble, as well as out of it, that the ſnare of evil may not be viſibly broken, and yet thy people may be delivered.

DISCOURSE II.

Of this, that the life of man consists not in the abundance of what he possesseth.

SUrely it is from a vain conceit, that the life of man consists in his abundance, that those who have not an abundance of earthly comforts, do so much covet after it; and those that have, do so much blesse themselves in it, as some are brought in saying, *Zach.* 11. 5. *Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich*; & those who have lost of their abundance do mourn so inordinately, for the want of it. But whatsoever men think, Christ assures us it is not so, *Luke* 12.15. For there saith he, *the life of a man consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* I think at present of six or or seven instances wherein that saying of Christ is verified. First, The length or prolongation of mans life, doth not consist in the abundance of what he possesseth. The oyle of riches cannot feed the lampe of life, *Psal.* 49. from the 6. to the 11. verse. *They that boast themselves of their riches, none of them can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransome for him, that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption, for he seeth that wise men dye, and leave their wealth to others.* Look abroad and you will see more poor men that have lived to a great age than rich, (yea in proportion to the number, there is of one and of the other;) Some diseases which poor people generally escape out of, and make but light of them, how often do they prove fatal and deadly to them that are rich? as if corruption were ambi-

tious

tious to claime kindred of them, more than of others, and the hungry wormes to feed upon their well fed fleſh, rather than that of others: to allude to *Job* 17. 14. *I have ſaid to corruption, thou art my father, to the worme, thou art my mother, and my ſiſter*: poor men lengthen their lives by labour, & rich men too too often ſhorten theirs by Luxury. Neither doth the end of mans life conſiſt in poſſeſſing an abundance; man was not ſent into the world, to load himſelf with thick clay, or to adde houſe to houſe, and land to land, as if he meant to dwell alone upon the earth, to poſſeſſe himſelfe of ſo many hundreds, or thouſands by the year, and ſo leave it to his poſterity. That theſe are trifles to the great end which man was ſent into the world for, appeareth by *Acts* 17. 27. where *Paul* tels us, that God hath ſet man upon the face of the earth, to ſeek after God (there is the end of life) if happily he might find him out. Nor in the third place, doth the Credit of a mans life conſiſt in the meere abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth; they that have nothing to commend them but their riches, though they are flattered by many, are truly honoured but by a few, moſt men will bow downe to thoſe idols of Silver and of God, as I may cal them (becauſe it is the faſhion ſo to doe) but when their backs are turned upon them, they are ready to ſay of them, as the Apoſtle concerning idols in the general, 1 *Cor.* 8. 4. we know that an Idol is nothing in the world, we know ſuch a one for all his brave outſides, and the caps and knees that are given him to be a worthleſſe perſon; and to ſignifie juſt nothing.

He

He is like a rich tomb without, which is ſo ill furniſhed within, that it is not worth opening. Fourthly, Neither doth the uſefulneſſe of mans life, conſiſt in the abundance of what he poſſeſſeth. *Solomon* tels of a poor man that by his wiſdome delivered a City, *Eccleſ.* 9. 15. That a rich man void of wiſdom, could not have done with all his wealth; ſome do more good in the world with a little, than others doe that have great eſtates. There are little figures in the world, and great Ciphers, great ones that ſpend all they can rap and rend together, upon their luſts, and no body is the better for it; and others of meane condition, that are content to ſpend, and to be ſpent for publick good. Some great trees do but ſhade and prevent the growth of other plants, and meanetime beare no fruit themſelves. Fifthly, Neither doth the ſucceſſefulneſſe of mans life, and of the undertakings, thereof depend wholly upon the abundance of what he poſſeſſeth. How many elder brothers that have had great eſtates left them by their Parents, great portions with their Wives, have in a few years, by Drunkenneſſe, Gaming, Whoreing, one or all of theſe, reduced themſelves and their families to a morſell of Bread, ſelling their birth-right as it were, for a Meſſe of Pottage? And on the other hand, how many younger brothers that have been bound to honeſt trades, and had no more from their parents, than a competent ſtock to ſet up with, have with the bleſſing of God, upon their induſtry, arrived at great eſtates? How many have ſet up with ſmal ſtocks, (it may be with nothing elſe but a ſtock of Credit) and

and in a few years, become very rich? and on the other hand, how many have had great ſtocks to begin with, and have ſoon brought them to nothing? Sixthly, Neither doth the life of men in, and as to their children (in whom parents are ſaid to live) conſiſt in, or depend upon the abundance of what they poſſeſſe, or of what they have to give them; how many fathers have given great portions with their children, thinking to match them highly, and in a few years (yea months ſometimes) have ſeen both their money and their children caſt away? Others againe have had little wherewith to prefer their children in marriage, and yet have ſeen them as well diſpoſed of, as if they could have given them thouſands. Neither are good and comfortable yokefellows, the onely things that men are not ſure always to purchaſe, for their children by giing great eſtates with them, but many other things there are that parents wiſh to ſee in their children, as namely, Health, Strength, Freedome from Deformity, Wiſdome, Grace, which things if they be wanting, cannot be bought for them with all the Gold that is in both the *Indies*, neither can parents comfortably live or injoy themſelves in their children, if all or moſt of thoſe things be wanting. Laſtly, the happineſſe and comfort of mans life (which I take to be that which Chriſt here chiefly intends by the life of man) doth certainly not conſiſt in the abundance of what he poſſeſſeth; it is one thing to poſſeſſe, and another thing to injoy, he may injoy more that poſſeſſeth leſſe. Hear *David*, *Pſal.* 37. 16. *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.* Some men

men have more comfort in a diſh of green herbs, than others can find in a ſtalled Oxe, *Zophar* ſpeaking of a wicked man, *Job* 20. 22. ſaith, *that in the fulneſſe of his ſufficiency, he ſhall be in ſtraits*, and why may not good men in the midſt of their ſtraits, have a kind of ſufficiency? the Scripture telling us, that a good man is ſatisfied from himſelf. I doubt not but ſome, and thoſe the very ſame perſons, have had more contentment in, or injoyment of God, and of themſelves in a lower and poorer, than ever they had in a higher and more plentiful condition, which hath reconciled them to the literal interpretation of theſe words, *James* 1. 10. *Let the rich* (which may be underſtood of him that was rich) *rejoyce in that he is made low*. Moſt men count it eaſier, when they are once down, to ſit low, than to ſit high. The body may be too full of blood to conſiſt with health, as well as too empty, though that blood be all good. There is a *Plethora* or *Redundancy* of good blood, as well as a *Cacochymia* or *Superfluity* of bad humours, which makes men leſſe chearful, than they would otherwiſe be; ſo that breathing a veine may give ſome reliefe againſt Melancholly. Wiſe Marriners having caſt away ſome of their lading in a tempeſt, do with more hearts-eaſe and ſecurity injoy the reſt; ſo fareth it with ſome men, after conſiderable loſſes, they are better ſatisfied with a part, than they were before with the whole. I ſee then experience doth abundantly confirme what Chriſt hath ſpoken, touching the life of man not conſiſting in the abundance of that he poſſeſſeth. I muſt then take leave to think, thoſe men are

ſick-brained that think, no man can be happy unleſſe he have ſo many hundreds, yea thouſands by the year. Let a man make me believe if he can, that no man can make a pleaſant meale under twenty or thirty diſhes, when I know a man may feed as delightfully upon two or three, yea it may be upon one. Perſwade us who can that no man can travel a few miles to his ful content without a Coach and ſix Horſes: or that a man cannot ſleepe ſweetly any where but upon a bed of down, hung with velvet curtaines, when we all know the contrary. I like our proverb well, Enough is as good as a feaſt; (yea ordinarily it is better) I doubt not but Diſcontent is as often clad in Silks and Sattins as in leather doublets and canvais breeches, many times eaſier feet goe in plainer ſhooes; give me rather high ſhooes ſuch as Plow-men wear, with ſound toes in them, than high great gouty toes, in velvet ſlippers; let me rather tread in the dirt, where I can ſtand faſt, than walk upon ſmooth ice, where I ſhall alwaies be in fear of falling; if then abundance of earthly things can neither prolong my daies, nor give me the true end of life, nor help me to that good name which is indeed a precious ointment, nor aſſure me of ſucceſſe, nor make me to be more uſeful, nor make my children more happie than with the bleſſing of God they may be without it, nor finally afford me more comfort and contentment in my life, than others have, who have no abundance, if God hath diminiſhed my abundance, I have no reaſon to mourne as one without hope, or as *Micah* did, when his idol Gods were taken from him, as if he had been

quite

quite undone. If God ſo pleaſe, I may in this impaired condition, be as happie, yea more than ever I was. In thy favour O Lord is life, yea thy favour is better than life its ſelfe, *Pſal.* 30. 5. *Pſ.* 63. 3. *Lift thou up upon me the light of thy countenance, and it ſhall make my heart more glad, than they whoſe Corne and Oyle increaſe.* Let me be ſo far from thinking I ſhall never ſee good daie more, becauſe I have loſt a part, yea it may be the greateſt part of what I ſometimes had, as nevertheleſſe to hope, that my laſt daies though much the pooreſt, may be my verie beſt.

DISCOURSE III.

Of the Leſſons of an afflicted eſtate well learnt, their making way for proſperity to inſue.

THe beſt waie to gaine, or regaine proſperitie, is to learne apace in the ſchoole of Adverſitie. Affliction is a teaching thing, for we read of Chriſt himſelfe that he did learne obedience by the things he ſuffered, *Heb.* 5. 8. As the Law is ſaid to be a School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt, ſo is miſery a School-maſter to bring us to happineſs, in caſe we give our ſelves to be taught by it. As parents will keep their children at ſchoole no longer when once they are fit for the Univerſitie, but ſend them thither; ſo will God tranſlate his people to the *Academy* of a more pleaſing condition, when they are dulie ripened and prepared for it by the ſchoole of adverſitie; witneſſe theſe words of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 94. 12. 13. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou*

thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, that thou mayest give him rest from the dayes of Adversity. Affliction is Gods plow, with which he breaketh up the fallow ground of mens hearts, and when that is done, he is most ready to sow the seedes of peace and comfort, as it is written, light is sowne for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Now sowing presuppoſeth plowing, nor would the husbandman doe the former *viz.* plow, but that he intends the latter, *viz.* to caſt in his seed, and would thereby prepare for it. Now there are several Leſſons which God doth or would teach men by his ſpeaking rod in affliction, if men doe or would hear the voice of that rod, and him that hath appointed it. Firſt, God by affliction would teach men to praie. Is any man afflicted, let him praie, *Ja.* 5. Affliction quickens men unto praier. As *Abſolom* ſetcht *Joab* to him by ſetting his corne on fire: in their affliction they will ſeek me earlie, ſaith God: yea and it alſo quickens men in praier, Chriſt in his Agonie prayed yet more ferventlie. Chriſt offered up prayers with ſtrong crying and tears to him that was able to ſave him from death: intimating that the approach of death did help to quicken him, *Heb.* 5. 7. It is a Proverb, *he that cannot pray, ſend him to Sea*, affliction is a dangerous Sea, and God ſends many men thither, that they may learne how to pray. After *Paul* was ſtruck down to the earth, and terrifyed with a voice from heaven we quicklie hear of him: Behold he prayeth! *Acts* 16. 11. ſo he had wont to doe in former times, for that he was a Phariſee, but now he ſo prayed and to ſo good

purpoſe

purpose as he never did before. And is not pray
or (such as it may be) a good means to get ou
of affliction? is it not said, call upon me in the
day of affliction, and I will deliver thee? *Psal.* 50.
15. and in *Psal.* 107. 17. 19. We read, *Fools becaus*
of their Transgressions are afflicted, then they cry t
the Lord in their trouble, he saveth them out of their
Distresses, also verse 13. If our affliction do not
cause us to restraine prayer from the Almighty
(like him that said, this evill is of the Lord, why
should I wait on him any longer?) our prayers
will prevaile with God, to restraine affliction in
his due time and manner. Secondly, Another
Lesson which affliction teacheth us (or rather
God by it) is to walk humbly, and to be hum-
ble, I am sure is the ready way to be exalted,
In *Deut.* 8. 2. We read how God lead the Israelites
40. years in the wilderness to humble them, im-
plying that a wilderness condition, tends to hum-
ble men. Earthly good things are the fuel of pride
and therefore pride of life is spoken of as if it were
a third part of all the things that are in the
world, 1 *John* 2. 16. *All that is in the world is, the*
lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride
of life, that is fuel to these; now when the fuel is a-
bated, it may be expected that the fire will slake.
And will not humility make way for our Deli-
verance? Surely it will, witnesse that promise,
Lev. 26. 41, 42. *If then their uncircumcised hearts*
be humbled, then will I remember my covenant
with Jacob, and I will remember the land. If God
humble us, he wil doe us good in our latter end,
Deut. 8. 2. See the promise *James* 4. 10. *humble*
your selves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift
you up. Doth not God by his Prophet tell us,

Isaiah

Isa. 57. 15. *That he dwelleth with the humble, & contrite, to revive them?* Thus you see affliction doth as it were, prepare Antidotes to expell its self; as some of our best Antidotes, for expulsion of poyson, are taken from the bodies of poysonous creatures; as Serpents, Vipers. And affliction sanctified, works humility, and humility exercised, works out affliction. Thirdly, A third Lesson, which God by affliction, teacheth man, is to be patient, and to submit to his divine will. And this also will be found an excellent means to remove affliction, and recover prosperity in due time. We read *Rom.* 5. 3. *How that Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience that hope which maketh not ashamed.* Now that which produceth an unflattering hope, doth surely contribute to deliverance, both as it is a kind of cause, in which hope foreseeth such an issue as deliverance is, as also, for that hope is as it were deliverance anticipated, for we are saved by hope, saith the text, *Rom.* 8. 24. But more plainly, *James* 5. 11. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job*, saith he, *and have seen the end of the Lord.* Job was patient, and God afterwards gave him double in lieu of what he had taken from him, it is good that a man should quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord, *Jam.* 3. 26. and verse 25. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him.* God sometimes hath all his end in afflicting, when he hath but made us humbly to stoop and submit, *Levit.* 26. 41. *If then they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity*, that is, if they did patiently beat the indignation of the Lord, as having sinned against him, and submit to the rod, then God promiseth that he would remember their

land, &c. it is Gods manner to withdraw afflictions, when he hath once accomplished the end for which he sent them. *Esa.* 10.12. God saith, that when he had performed his whole work upon Mount *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, then would he punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of *Assyria*, who was their oppressor. If then the design of God in afflicting, be only to make us submit to his will (as sometimes it is) when we have learnt to do that (like *Abraham* that was become willing to sacrifice his *Isaac*, which was all God intended to put him to) then is deliverance in one kind or other not far off. God doth not intend to make some men always poor, and despicable, though they are so for the present, but yet the copy of his countenance towards them, is as if he meant they should always be in adversity, whereas all he stands upon, is to make them contented so to be, if such be his will concerning them; and when they have quietly laid themselves down at Gods feet, bound their *Isaac* to the altar with a true intent to sacrifice him to the good pleasure of God, and stretch forth their hand to do it, then comes as it were a voice from heaven saying, let it alone, it is enough that thou hast done already; Behold I will accept a *Ram* for a burnt offering, instead of thy son, as God dealt with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22.13. God doth many things but to try us and make us believe he will take all from us (when he means onely to wean us from all) that he may say of us, as of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22.12. *Now I know thou fearest God, for thou hast not withheld thy Son, thy onely Son from me.* To be content always, to be in trouble, if God will have it so, is the

way

way to come out, is one good way to escape. Fourthly, Affliction teacheth us to live under an awful sense of God. It is a Schoole of fear as to God, *Psal.* 119. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements,* (saith *David* to God.) If God appear as a consuming fire, one maine use we are to make of it is, to serve him with Godly fear; *Heb.* 12. Now it is evident, that a due fear of God doth make way for Deliverance out of trouble: When God saw that *Abraham* was so fearful to offend him, that he durst not withhold his son *Isaac* whom God had commanded him to sacrifice with his own hands, he gave him *Isaac* again, and accepted a *Ram* in his stead, *Gen.* 22. 12. When God had brought *Manasseh* to know that the Lord was God, that is, to fear and reverence God as became him, and to humble himself before him, then saith the text, *the Lord heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his Kingdome*, 2 *Chron.* 33. 13. Fifthly, Affliction is a Schoole of obedience and circumspect walking, *Eph.* 5. 15, 16. *See then that yee walk circumspectly, because the dayes are evil.* Those that walke in the dark take more than ordinary care lest they stumble, and fall, now dayes of evill or affliction, are called dayes of darkness. Prosperity hath hardly more Temptations on one hand; than great affliction hath on the other hand: hence *Agur* deprecates poverty, *Prov.* 30. 9. *Lest I be poor and Steale, and take the name of the* Lord *in vaine.* The Apostle was afraid lest the incestuous *Corinthian*, if not timely comforted, might be swallowed up of two much sorrow, 2. *Cor.* 2. 7.

and leſt *Sathan* ſhould get an advantage againſt him, verſe 11. affliction is a tempeſt, and therefore we muſt do like Pilots, who ſteer with greateſt circumſpection in a ſtorm, the hard froſt of adverſity, though it be apt to kill certain weeds, as pride, ſecurity, and ſuch like? yet if care be not taken, it may alſo nip many hopefull bloſſomes (as unſeaſonable froſts uſe to do.) If ſuch eminent worthyes as *Elijah*, *Job*, *Jonas*, *Jeremy*, were between whiles worſe for thoſe afflictions, which ſhould have made them better, (as we know they were) we had need look to our ſelves, and walk circumſpectly at ſuch a time. Now that our ſo doing will make way for our deliverance, *David* tels us, *Pſal.* 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God.* And the Prophet, *Iſa.* 59. 20. *The Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and unto them that turne from tranſgreſſion in Jacob.* Sixthly, Another Leſſon which affliction teacheth men, is to redeem time, *Eph.* 5. 16. *Redeeming the time becauſe the dayes are evill.* Young Scholars are not more ordinarily whipt for any thing, than for loſing their time, and in order to making them ſpend their time better. We have never leſſe time to loſe than when the rod of the Almighty is upon our backs. Affliction makes work whereſoever it comes (as Sickneſſe in a Family uſeth to do) and time is then moſt precious, when we have moſt work upon our hands, when we have moſt to do; yea it alſo indiſpoſeth for work, and when the iron is blunt, we had need put to the more ſtrength. Travellers make the beſt of their time in the depth of winter, and will hardly

draw

draw bit till night, becauſe the ſhortneſſe of the dayes, and badneſſe both of the wayes and weather are great hindrances. When we look for the greateſt impediments, we had need take the moſt time before us; neither is the Redeeming of time more a duty in Affliction, than a direct means to get out of it. Take one inſtance for all in *Paul* and *Silas*, who being in priſon, were redeeming their midnight time from reſt and ſleepe, for ſinging and praiſing of God, *Acts* 16. And the next news we have of them is, they were both miraculouſly ſet at liberty. Laſtly, Affliction is a Schoole of Faith and Affiance in God. *David*, ſaith *Pſal.* 63. 3. At what time he was afraid he would put his truſt in God, and when he was overwhelmed, he would fly to the rock that was higher than he, meaning to God; and upon the wing of faith. And it is ſaid that ſhe who is a widdow indeed truſteth in God, and why ſhe that is a widdow, rather than ſhe who is a wife, but becauſe the condition of a widdow, is ordinarily more afflicted and diſconſolate: Moreover Afflictions are called the tryal of our Faith. All which paſſages prove that affliction is a Schoole of Faith as well as of patience. Now withall it is famouſly known, that the exerciſe of Faith, and dependance upon God, is a notable expedient for the removal of Affliction. What miracles of Deliverance are attributed to *Faith*, *Heb.* 11. 33. By Faith they ſtopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, eſcaped the edge of the ſword, turned to flight the armies of the aliens; and paſſed the red Sea, as upon dry land; which the *Egyptians* eſſaying to doe

were drown'd, ver.29. And if you will have it from the mouths of two witneſſes, let that of the *Pſalmiſt* be added *Pſal.* 22.4. Our *fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them, they truſted in thee and were not confounded.* Thus have I mentioned ſeven doors belonging to the valley of *Acor* (which ſignifies trouble) or ſo many wayes of eſcape out of Affliction, which are alſo dutyes in and under it. I ſee then in this caſe there are two gaps may be ſtopt with one hedge (a man may *una fidelià duos dealbare parietes*) there are two intentions may be anſwered with one and the ſame medicine; two queſtions may be equally ſatisfied with one and the ſame anſwer; namely theſe two, how ought I to carry my ſelfe under Affliction? and what courſe ſhould I take to get out of Affliction? He that ſtudieth the latter onely, ſhall be able to do neither, he that minds the former well, ſhall doe both under one. He that conſiders onely how to get out of Affliction, troubles himſelfe with Gods work, and neglects his own, and neither can he himſelfe do what he aimes at, nor juſtly expect that God ſhould doe it for him. But he that makes it his onely buſineſſe to carry himſelfe under Affliction, as he ought; doth what he can, and intereſſeth God to do that which himſelf cannot doe, let us doe our part, and God will not faile to doe his, and ſo both will be done.

We need not trouble our ſelves, about getting into another form, let us but out-learn others that are in the ſame form (*viz.* of Affliction) with us, or at leaſt-wiſe keep pace with the beſt of them, and our maſter which is in heaven, will take

take care of our tranſlation into another forme, that is more to be deſired, when we ſhall be fit for it. I find God very angry with thoſe Jews that would think of nothing but comming out of captivity, ſo ſoon almoſt as they were gone into it, and would hearken to any lying Prophets that would ſooth them up with ſuch pleaſing ſtories; whereas their duty was to bring their ſpirits to be content with a captivity of ſeventy years long, to learne the law of ſuch a condition as that, and to comply with it, ſee *Jer.* 27. 8. *And it ſhall come to paſs that the Nation and Kingdom, which will not put their neck under the yoke of* Nebuchadnezzar, *that Nation will I puniſh with the Sword, and Famine, and Peſtilence, till I have conſum'd them by his hand.* And verſe 17. *Hearken not to them* (namely *who ſaid, that the veſſels of the Lords houſe ſhould ſhortly be brought again from Babylon.* verſe 16. *for they propheſie a lye to you*) *ſerve the King of Babylon and live,* as if he had ſaid, Buckle your ſelves to the duty of your captive eſtate, patiently beare the yoke which God hath put about your necks, and it ſhall be better for you both at the preſent, and for the future. Apprentices that caſt off the yoke before they have ſerved out their time, doe many of them never come to be free-men, whilſt they live. *Hananiah* his diverting the Jewes, from the duties incumbent upon them as deſigned for a long captivity, by telling them that within two years, God would bring again the captives of *Judah*, *Jer.* 28. 4. I ſay his ſo doing coſt him his life, verſe 16. *Thus ſaith the Lord, this year thou ſhalt dye, &c.* I cannot but obſerve how God commanded the Jews to provide

for a lasting captivity, *Jer.* 28.4. *Thus saith the Lord, to those whom I have caused to be carryed away from Jerusalem to Babylon, build yee houses and dwell in them, and plant Gardens and eat the fruit of them: Take ye wives and beget sons and daughters. And seek the peace of the City whether I have caused you to be carryed captives, and pray to the* Lord *for it, &c.* As if he had said, expect not to come out from thence suddenly, but make the best of that condition I have allotted for you, and carry your selves under it as becomes you, be satisfied and content with it, and quietly wait till my time shall come, even the set time for your Deliverance. I can do no lesse than turn the advice, I have given to my selfe and others, into such petitions as follow; Lord thou hast greatly Afflicted us, teach us thereby so to call upon thee, in this day of our trouble, that thou mayst in due time deliver us. Humble us under thy mighty hand, that thou mayest lift us up, give us so to submit to thee, and accept our punishment, that thou mayst remember our land. Give us such patience as thou gavest to thy servant *Job*, that thou mayst make such an issue for us, as thou didst for him. Cause us to fear thy great name, that when we pour out our cryes to thee, who canst deliver from death, as Christ did in the dayes of his flesh; we may be heard as he was, in that he feared. Cause us to order our conversations aright, that thou mayest shew us thy Salvation. Give us to redeem time in an evil day, as *Paul* and *Silas* did, that thou by thine outstretched arm, mayst rescue us as thou didst them, knocking off the chaines and fetters of our present troubles: And above all

all things cauſe us to abound in faith, as *our fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered; they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.* We deſire to ſay with the three children, *The God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us, even out of a fiery furnace which hath been prepared for us*; but whither he will or no, we will truſt in him; Whilſt thou chaſteneſt us, O teach us out of thy Law, and we ſhall not need to doubt but thou at length wilt give us reſt from the daies of adverſity.

DISCOURSE IV.

Of being content with Food and Rayment.

HOw many would be wel ſatisfied with what the Fire hath left them, if they could but take that excellent counſel which the Apoſtle gives them, 1 *Tim.* 6.8. *Having food and rayment, let us be therewith content.* Statelie Houſes, noble ſhops, full Trades, vaſt Incomes, ſome have not now as formerlie, who yet have food and rayment for them and theirs. Did *Jacob* indent with God for any more? *Gen.* 28.20. *If God will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, then ſhall the Lord be my God.* Did *Agur* ask any more of God, (as for the things of this world,) when he ſaid, *Feed me with food convenient?* Yea, did he not deprecate that which was much more, when he ſaid *Give me not riches, leſt, &c.* Dare we abſolutely pray for more than daily bread, (and other things as neceſſarie for life, whereof rayment is one?) and ſhall we peremptorilie deſire more than we dare to pray for? Can thoſe deſires be regular; which we fear to make the mat-

matter of our prayers? Or, if God vouchſafe us as much as we think lawful and fit to pray for, why ſhould we not be content? Turn your deſires of greater things than theſe, into the form of a prayer, and hear how it will ſound: Lord give me riches, though *Agur* were ſo unwiſe as to pray againſt them. Lord give me with *Dives* to be cloathed with Purple and fine Linnen, and to fare ſumptuouſlie every day; or to have wherewithall ſo to do. Lord give me ſo many hundreds by the Year, more than I need to ſpend. Lord give me one thouſand pound at leaſt; but rather two or three for every childe; I cannot be content with leſs as a portion for each of them. Offer if you dare to put ſuch Incenſe as this into Chriſt his Golden Cenſor; Appear if you dare with ſuch requeſts as theſe at the Throne of grace; Expect if you can that as to ſuch requeſts Jeſus Chriſt ſhould intercede for you. So abſurd prayers cannot be good deſires; nor can it be otherwiſe than abſurd to be diſcontented for the want of thoſe things which were abſurd to pray for. How many of our betters have barelie food and rayment, and yet are very thankful for what they have? The *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs had but bread and water, when for their murmuring they were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer, 1 *Cor.* 10. Beware of grumbling at Manna, and luſting after Quailes, leſt for ſo doing your carcaſſes fall in the Wilderneſs, as theirs did. If the end of life were to eat and drink, it were another matter; but if the end of eating and drinking be, that we may live, ſuch food as will keep us alive and in health, ought to be accepted

cepted with thankfulneſs: what a feaſt would a belly-full of bread be counted in a time of famine. How precious was an Aſſes head, yea a cab of Doves dung in the famine of *Samaria*, 2 *Kings* 6. 28. Are we better than *Lazarus* who would have been glad of *Dives* his crums?

If that were a parable, then *Lazarus* is there put not for one perſon, but for every one, that is, ſuch as he is deſcribed to have been: namely deſigned for *Abraham*'s boſome, and yet glad of crums in this World. Let me here diet with *Lazarus*, (if the will of God be ſo) may I but be ſure hence-forth to lodge with him in the boſome of *Abraham*. Do we make light of food and raiment for us and ours? alas, what more can this World afford us, though we have ever ſo much of it? *Solomon* complaining how the hearts of men are taken up with thoughts and cares of worldly things (which is conceived to be the meaning of that difficult expreſſion, *Eccleſ.* 3. 11. *He hath ſet the World in their hearts,*) ſhowes what the benefit of the World, and of the things therein is. *I know* (ſaith he) *that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoyce, and to do good in his life: And alſo that every man ſhould eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labours*, v. 12, 13. I finde the rich man ſpoken of *Luk.* 16. 19. diſtinguiſhed from the beggar only by this, that he ate better meat, and wore better cloaths. For the Text ſaith, *That he was cloathed in Purple, and fared ſumptuouſly every day.*

Now what great matter is it, that our vile bodies ſhould have every thing of the beſt? What are our bodies, eſpecially if too much pamper'd: but as ſo many reeking dunghils, annoying our ſouls

ſoules with ill ſteames and vapours? or like dead carcaſſes joyned to living men, (a torture invented by *Mezintius*) which are an unſufferable offence to them. As it is ſaid of *Eve*, that ſhe was firſt in the tranſgreſſion; and as ſhe drew in her husband, ſo our bodies many times, like ſo much tinder do receive the firſt ſparks of temptation: or like the thatch of an houſe, are firſt kindled, and as that might ſet the whole houſe, ſo do they the whole ſoul on fire. Many ſins begin at the body, are occaſioned or fomented, or both, by the over-ſanguine, or melancholy, or cholerick temper or diſtemper thereof: which ſhewes we are no debtors to the fleſh, to fulfill the deſires thereof. Moreover if we conſider whence our bodies came, and whither they are going, it will appear there is no ſuch cauſe to be greatly concerned for them; that they ſhould wear the fineſt wool, and eat the fineſt of the wheat. Duſt they were, and to duſt they ſhall return. Why muſt they needs be fed ſo daintily which themſelves muſt ſhortly become food for wormes? when we feed our bodies too high, what do we but feed our luſts, yea, feed diſeaſes in our very bodies? ſo that it is become a proverb, that the *Engliſh* man digs his grave with his teeth. Few kill their bodies by mortifying them: but many by indulging them. *Chriſtmas* kills many more than *Lent*. As the Ape is ſaid to hug her young ones to death: ſo many kill their bodies with too much kindneſs to them. As over-pamper'd Horſes oft times throw their riders, and give them their deaths wound: ſo are men too commonly thrown both into ſickneſs, ſin, and death it ſelf, by indulging their bodies

bodies over much. The body (as one ſaith well) ought to be kept, as not *infra*, ſo neither *ſupra negotium*; *ſed per negotio*; not too high for its work, but equal to it. *Paul* ſaith, that he did *keep under his body, and brought it into ſubjection.* So far was he from cockring of it till it became his maſter, as too many do. There is no ſmall danger in over-exalting our blood and natural ſpirits.

Job was never more afraid of his children, than when they went a feaſting from houſe to houſe. Then did he offer a Sacrifice for each of them, leaſt they ſhould blaſpheme God, or had done it. A cheap and ſimple diet may preſerve health and ſtrength as well as the beſt dainties and coſtlieſt varieties. *Daniel*, and the *three children* who lived of pulſe and water, were fairer and fatter than all thoſe which did eat the portion of the Kings meat. *Dan.* 1. 15. They are ſometimes the leaneſt cattel which devoure the fat. As for any ſervice of God or men, he ſhall be much more fit, who having no pallatable diet, eats but for neceſſitie, and to ſatisfie his hunger; than one that by the deliciouſneſs of his fare, is tempted to devoure more than he can well digeſt. As for delight in meats and drinks: he that brings but hunger and thirſt enough to a courſe meale, ſhall have more of that (and thoſe are ſauces which the poor have uſuallie moſt of) than he that with halfe an appetite ſits down to a great Feaſt. Why then, having a competencie of wholſome food, though but mean and ordinarie, ſhould we not be therewithall content? Are we better then *John the Baptiſt*, of whom it is ſaid, that his diet was Locuſts and wilde Honey?

ney? Some have found more ſweetneſs in a draught of cold water (ſuch as their thirſt hath been) than in all the Wines and Spirits which they have drank at other times? Why then may not a mean diet content us, yea prove delicious to us, as *Salomon* ſaith, To the hungry ſoule every bitter thing is ſweet. Povertie brings ſuch ſawce with it, as will make a diſh of Tripe more ſavorie than a Veniſon Paſtie is to a rich man.

Then, as for Rayment: if we have but that which may ſerve the turn to keep us warm and decent, though it be courſe and plain: why ſhould we not be content therewith? We read in *Mark* 1.6. *Iohn was cloathed in Camels-hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins* (which was as mean as could be;) & do we not read of ſome of the primitive Chriſtians, that *they wandred about in ſheepe-skins, and Goat-skins. Heb.* 11.37. Are we better than they? would ſuch habits become us worſe than them? Time was, that God bid the *Iſraelites to put off their ornaments, that he might know what to do with them. Exod.*33.5. Did God ever ſpeak, as if he knew not what to do with a people for want of ornaments? Did he ever ſeem diſpleaſed that a people were not fine enough? Why ſhould that habit diſpleaſe us, that God may beſt like us in, and know what to doe with us? Whilſt we are clad with coſtly attire, it is hard for us at the ſame time to be cloathed with humilitie: yea, not to have pride compaſs us as a chain.

Why ſhould not mean houſes ſatisfie us, if God in ſuch will appoint the bounds of our habitation? If the primitive Chriſtians were content

tent with *mountains, dens, and caves of the earth*, as we read, *Heb.* 11. 37. why ſhould we repine at mean dwellings, which yet may anſwer the main ends for which houſes are built; *viz.* warmth, privacie, defence, and ſuch like? were dens and caves better than ſuch houſes? or is it becauſe we think our ſelves better than thoſe that dwelt in dens and caves? Surely neither. It is but a little while that we and ours ſhall have need of any ſuch things, as houſes, food, and rayment; and may not that which is but mean and ordinarie content us for a while? Did not Citizens make ſhift with any thing whilſt the Citie was burning? Glad they were to crowd their goods, their children, yea themſelves into any hole where they could get, and thankful to thoſe that would receive them, and well content with it, as thinking with themſelves it was but for a while. Well, after a little while thou that cameſt naked into the world ſhalt go naked out of it, and never uſe ſuch clothing more: and whereas meats are for the belly, God ſhall deſtroy both them and it.

For the preſent then, be content with ſuch things as you have: as travellers uſe to make ſhift with any thing upon a journey: and ſouldiers upon a march; ſeeing ſuch things are but for a ſeaſon, and they hope for better afterwards. Lord I am ſenſible that this counſel, *viz.* to be content with food and raiment, is very good. Oh give to me and others a heart to take it. If we need many things, and are not ſatisfied without the beſt of every thing we need, (of ſuch ſort as food and raiment) it is our weakneſs. So people that are ſick would taſte of every bodies

beer

beer, and none is good enough for them: ſome is too new, ſome too ſtale, ſome too bitter, ſome too ſower, ſome too ſtrong, ſome too ſmall, ſome fault there ſeemes to be in all; whereas it may be there is no fault in any, but all the fault is in their diſtempered pallates. One ſort of drink ſerves him that is in health (let that one be what it will, ſo it be but tollerable) Lord give me that health within my ſoul that I may not long for any thing that is not ſimply needful; nor be diſpleaſed with any thing that is truly good, though not the beſt, (as being humbly perſwaded that every ſuch thing is better than I deſerve) let me not ſeek great things for my ſelf, at any time; but leaſt of all at ſuch a time as this, in which thou haſt *broken down what thou didſt once build up, and plucked up what thou didſt once plant, and ſeemeſt to be bringing evil upon all fleſh*: as thou didſt threaten the *Jewes* of old, *Jer.* 45. 5. May I be able to ſay with *David*, *Pſal.* 131. 2. *I do not exerciſe my ſelf in things that be too high for me: I have quieted my ſelf as a child that is weaned of his Mother: my ſoul is as a weaned child.* Oh give me contentedly to feed on any thing, when thou wilt have me feed no longer on the milk of thoſe more luſcious comforts which I have formerly enjoyed. Let the food of my body be what thou wilt; ſo thou wilt but feed my ſoul with that bread of life which came down from heaven: and let my bodily raiment be ever ſo mean, ſo thou wilt but enable me to put on the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and give me to be cloathed in the garment of that elder brother, the robe of whoſe righteouſneſs is that *white raiment ſpoken of*, *Rev.* 3. 18. which ſuffereth

not

not the ſhame of our ſinful nakedneſs to appear. If I have but food and raiment for my ſelf: the worſt is, I can contribute little, if any thing, to others: but this I know, that *where there is a willing mind, thou acceptest according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. With God the will without the deed is more than the deed without the will. 2 *Cor.* 8. 10. He is *rich in good works*, who is *ready* (that is wholly inclined) *to diſtribute*; if he had but wherewithall, 1 *Tim.* 6. 18. Lord, if thou wilt make me thy Steward, intruſting me with an eſtate wherewith I may do good to others: I ſhall count it a bleſſed thing to be both able and willing to give; rather than to be on the receiving hand. But if thou wilt allot me only food and raiment for me and mine, and that none of the beſt neither: thy will be done; that I know will bear our charges through this world. Mannah and old cloaths (for the *Iſraelites* had no new ones for 40. years together) will ſerve us in the Wilderneſs: only ſweeten our paſſage, by aſſuring us we ſhall at laſt arrive at thy heavenly *Canaan*; and then ſhall we ſay, The lines are fallen to us in a pleaſant place, verily we have a goodly heritage.

DISCOURSE V.

Of the way to be aſſured of Food and Rayment.

ME-thinks I hear one or other ſaying, we ſhould be well contented with Food and

Raiment, if we were but ſure of that; but ſo great is our charge, ſo vaſt have our loſſes been, times are ſo hard, trading ſo dead, and charity it ſelf ſo cold, and poverty ſo common and almoſt univerſal; that we do much fear we ſhall not have bread for our ſelves and Family, or if bread to eat, ſcarcely raiment to put on.

It is not hard to gueſs, if *Chriſt* were corporally upon Earth, and ſhould over-hear ſuch language; how and in what words he would upbraid you. Surely, as he did them to whom he ſpeaks, *Mat. 6. 30. O ye of little faith.* The occaſion of which words appears by the context to have been a ſinful miſtruſt they had, that God would not ſo much as feed and cloathe them. How many at this day are ſick of the ſame diſeaſe? and therefore had need to be put in mind of that courſe which Chriſt took to cure thoſe, to whom he ſpoke: which remedies may prove as effectual upon themſelves. No advice at firſt might ſeem more ſtrange than that which *Chriſt* gives, *Mat. 6. 25. Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on.* One would wonder where-with-all *Chriſt* ſhould make good that ſaying of his, and yet we finde him giving a plain reaſon of what he had ſaid, *verſ. 26. Behold the fowles of the aire, they ſow not, neither do they reape, nor gather into barnes, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they*, verſ. 28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? conſider the Lillies of the Field, how they grow, they toyle not, neither do they ſpin, yet* Solomon *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe*, verſ. 30. *Wherefore if God ſo cloathe the graſſe, which to day is, and to morrow*

row is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more cloathe you? I am far from thinking that *Christ* by those words of his, intended to encourage idleness, or to give men to think, that though they could work and would not, yet God would provide food and raiment for them; as he doth for the birds, that neither sowe nor reape, and for the Lillies that neither toile nor spin; but I rather think that those words were spoken to incourage those that would work and cannot, as namely those that are bed-ridden, such as have lost the use of their limbs, or of one or more of their senses, as sight, hearing, and that such, though unable either to sowe or reape, (like the fowles of the aire) either to toile or spin, like the lillies, yet ought not to doubt, but that he who feedes the one, and cloaths the other, will do as much for them. Why may not those that have the use of their limbes and senses (together with a heart to make any good use of them) be fortified against the fear of want by those arguments, which may relieve, even those that want them? Were I lame or blind, or paralytick, or bed-ridden: to think of Gods feeding the Birds and cloathing the Grasse, might be a support to me: but if I have all my limbes and senses; not only may faith swim in the forementioned consideration of that which God doth for bruites and plants, but there is also a shallower water, in which reason and sense may a little wade. He that can work, and is willing so to do, may rationally hope he shall not starve.

The instance I have mentioned was an encouragement from providence, which is no ways to be slighted. But there are also promises to sup-

port our faith in the caſe. *viz.* that God will certainlie feed and cloathe us; at leaſtwiſe upon ſuch reaſonable termes and conditions, as he hath engaged himſelf to do it. Is not that a promiſe plain enough? *Pſal.* 37. 3. *Truſt in the Lord and do good, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* God hath repeated this promiſe over and over, to let us ſee he is mindful of what he hath ſpoken. *Pſal.* 34. 9, 10. *O fear ye the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.* If we deſire a cloud of witneſſes, or co-witneſſing promiſes to ſhield us from the fear of want (as the *Iſraelites* had a Pillar of Cloud to ſhelter them in the Wilderneſs) it will not be difficult to add many more. Hee in whom all the promiſes are yea and Amen, aſſureth us from his own mouth, that if we *firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God & his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added to us,* (*Mat.* 6. 33.) *viz.* meat, drink and cloathing: for thoſe were the things he had been ſpeaking of, *verſ.* 31. The Scripture ſaith, that *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is.* Now a ſecurity for food and raiment, one would think were as little as any thing ſo called, can amount to. Moreover in *Pſal.* 84. 11. It is ſaid, that God *will with-hold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.* So that if food and raiment may be reckoned good things (as things of ſo abſolute neceſſity muſt needs be reckoned ordinarily) then come they within the compaſs of that general promiſe. Examine we one witneſs more, *Prov.* 10. 3. *The Lord will not ſuffer the ſoul of the righteous to famiſh* (that is the righteous perſon himſelf) I may not omit ſo con-

conſiderable teſtimonies, as thoſe which follow, *Pſal.*33.18,19. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and that hope in his mercy, to keep them alive in Famine. Pſal.*37.19. ſpeaking of *the upright*, he ſaith, *In the dayes of Famine they ſhall be ſatisfied. Prov.*5.20. *In Famine he ſhall redeem thee from death.* It is far more difficult to feed men in a time of famine, than of plenty: as it was not ſo eaſie to ſpread a table in the wilderneſs, as in a fruitful Countrey: (I mean for any but God, to whom all things are not only poſſible, but eaſie.) Methinks the promiſes of ſupplies even in famine, ſhould be great ſupport in a time of common plenty, though things be ſcarce with us.

But let me take in all thoſe conditions, on which God hath ſuſpended the promiſes of food and raiment, (as I have already mentioned ſome of them) leſt we ſhould think God to fail of his promiſe, when it is only we that fail in thoſe conditions, to which it is made.

One condition is, that we uſe diligence, *Prov.* 10.4. *He becometh poor that dealeth with a ſlack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Prov.*19.15. *An idle ſoul ſhall ſuffer hunger*, which plainly implies, that a diligent ſoul ſhall not. It will be a new leſſon to ſome, both old and young to become paine-takers. They have not known what it meant, to eat their bread in the ſweat of their browes. But they that be afraid of work, ſuch as they are able to performe, are worſe ſcared than hurt, (as we ſay proverbially) and wil finde that the bread of diligence is far more ſweet, than ever was that of idleneſs. Thoſe that are given to hunt, account the exerciſe as good

as the Venison, and better too. God puts no hard termes upon us, if henceforth he will make us earne our bread before we eat it, though he have formerly so much indulged us, as to let us eat the bread we never earned. Idle persons have oft times meat without stomacks: but paines-takers have both stomacks and meat. That house stands upon able pillars, and is like to last, in which every body is addicted to honest labour, which is one of the most imitable things. I have heard of the *Dutch*, that from the time their Children are of any growth or understanding, they set them to work. They seem to have taken warning by those words of *Solomon*, *Eccles.* 10. 18. *By much sloathfulnes the building decayeth, and thorough idlenes, the house droppeth thorough*, which words made me to say, that house stands upon able pillars, where every body is well imployed. If that were the worst fruit of the late fire, that idle persons of what quality soever, were forced to take pains, the matter were not great: yea many would be made better by it.

Moreover to our Diligence we must add frugality; if we would promise our selves never to want food and raiment. Frugality is that pruning-hook, which lops off all the unnecessary branches of superfluous expences? God hath no where ingaged himself to maintain any mans pride and prodigality: though he hath to supply his necessity. It is usual with God to let prodigals come to huskes: yea and want them too, before they die, or return. *Prov.* 23. 21. *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.* It is a fault in those that gain by it, to let their customers have as much wine as they will call for, when they

they have had enough already: A greater fault in Parents, to let them have money at will, knowing they will ſpend it upon their luſts. It is not then to be expected, that God who hates to ſee men make proviſion for the fleſh, ſhould bind himſelf to give them wherewithall to do it. As therefore we would be ſure of food and raiment, let us wiſely conſider what muſt be ſpent, and what may be ſpared. *Fruſtra fit per plura.* He that requires ſuperfluities, is like to want neceſſaries; but he may build upon a ſupply of neceſſaries, who hath learnt to pare off all ſuperfluities. They are deſires of Gods own creating, (and in ſuch a meaſure) which do call but for neceſſaries, as food and raiment: and therefore he that made theſe deſires, we may expect will ſatisfie them. But when we crave ſuperfluities, it is ſin that opens its mouth wide, yea which inlargeth it like hell, and what reaſon is there that God ſhould fill it?

And as we muſt be frugal, in caſe we would be ſure of food and raiment; ſo one good way is to be mercifull, and ready to diſtribute to the neceſſities of others, ſo long as we have wherewith. Frugality and charity may well ſtand together. It is no ill husbandry to lend what we can ſpare upon infallible ſecuritie, and for great advantage. *He that gives to the poor, lends to the Lord.* And if the principal be but a *cup of cold water*, he ſhall have conſideration for it. *Matth.* 10. 42. *He ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.* See *Pro.* 11.24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet encreaſeth.* Can a man reap, unleſs he firſt ſow? or reap liberallie if he ſow but ſparingli:? Who ſo ſhall read *Pſal.*41.1,2,3. will finde that one of the beſt

waies never to want our ſelves, is not to let others want if we can help it. *He that conſidereth the poor, God will conſider him*; though he have neither ſtrength, nor certaintie of friends, or money to help him, or hardly one that he can promiſe himſelf will make his bed for him. Where the three laſt mentioned qualifications do meet in Diligence, Frugalitie, and merciful diſpoſition, it is ſeldom, if ever ſeen, that God doth ſuffer ſuch perſons to want neceſſaries: though ſaving grace, and the true fear of God be not found in them.

But if any deſire yet further ſecuritie, as for matter of food and rayment; let them conſider what is ſpoken. *Pſal.* 104.27. *Theſe wait all upon thee, that thou mayſt give them their meat in due ſeaſon. Thou openeſt thy hand, they are filled with good*, viz. Thoſe *innumerable creeping things, both great and ſmall, which are in the Sea*, ſpoken of *v.* 25. alſo *The young Lions which roar after their prey, and ſeek their meat from God*, ſpoken of *v.* 21. alſo, *Pſal.* 145.15. *The eyes of all wait on thee, thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon. Thou openeſt thy hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſire of every living thing.* Here we ſhall do well to remember, what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *Doth God take care for Oxen?* that is, doth he not take more care for Mankind, than for Oxen? If then he feed them (and creatures of leſs uſe than they) may we not conclude, he will much more feed us! may not theſe words of *David*, *Pſal.* 23.1. afford us ſome reliefe, *The Lord is my ſhepheard, I ſhall not want.* Is not God a ſhepheard to other of his people, as well as he was to *David*? Yea are we not in ſome ſenſe his ſheep, as we

are

are meerlie his creatures. *Psal.*100.3. *It is he that made us, and not we our selves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Should not the extraordinarie waies which God hath taken to supplie men with food and rayment, when ordinarie means have failed, be some stay to us? When the *Israelites* wanted bread in the Wilderness, did not God rain down Manna from heaven? and when they wanted water, did he not give it them out of the rock? and whereas there was no cloathing to be had there, did he not keep their garments from waxing old, and make them serve them forty years? Did not God say to *Elijah*, 1 *King.*17.4. *I have commanded the Ravens to feed thee*; and accordingly they *brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and likewise in the evening.* *v.*6. The widdow of *Zarephath* had but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oile in a cruse for her self and her son, when there was yet three years famine to come: so that she reckoned but upon one good meal, and so she and her son to lie down and die; and out of that the Prophet did demand a cake for himselfe, *v.*13. and yet did he assure her, that *the barrel of meal should not waste, nor the cruse of oyle faile, till the Lord sent rain upon the earth*; and accordingly it came to pass, *v.*16. Who knows not the storie of *Christ* his feeding *five thousand with five loaves and two fishes? Mat.* 14.19. and yet there was enough, and to spare. I have somewhere read of a good man, who in the time of the siege and famine at *Rochel* was kept alive by a Hen that came every day and laid one egge, one or more in the place where he lodged. Nor do I doubt but there are many

true

true stories of as remarkable supplies vouchsafed to such as were destitute of ordinarie means. Is not God the great housholder of the world, from whom the whole familie in heaven and earth is named? and do you think he will starve those that are of his familie? howbeit he hath told us, that he who provides not for his own household is worse than an Infidel? Is not the earth the Lords, and the fulness thereof? *Are not all the beasts of the forrest his, and the cattel upon a thousand hills? Psal.* 50.10. And will he starve us (think you) either by the want of food or raiment; whilst he hath such an overplus of all needful things wherewith to supply us? What father would see his childe want, whilst he had more than enough to give him? If we then that are evil will not let our children want whilst we abound, shall we think so hardly of God? what if God hath put the world into other mens hands, and not into ours? hath he not the hearts of those men in his own hands, and can he not inlarge them towards us, when and as far as he pleaseth? He can make enemies not only to be at peace with us: but to be kind to us. *Psal.* 106.46. *He made them also to be pitied of all them that carried them captives. The barbarous people shewed us no little kindness*, saith *Paul*, *Acts* 28.2. How easily can God perswade even *Egyptians* to part with their *Jewels* & *Earings*, to his people; how much more *Israelites* to one another? He that can make enemies to become our friends, how much more friends to be friendly? Though men be very hard, he can as well make them succour us, as fetch water out of a rock? It is ordinary with God to make them shew his people

people moſt kindneſs in their extremity, from whom they did little or leaſt expect it. Thoſe whoſe hearts were ſhut towards us in the time of our plenty, ſhall (it may be) be wide opened in and under our neceſſity. A friend is ſaid to be made for Adverſity: and God makes thoſe friends for his people at ſuch a time, though at other times they were not ſuch. *Elijah* could leſt expect to be fed by a Raven, of all creatures (from whoſe aptneſs to take, rather than give, comes our word ravenous) neither did the Ravens do any thing for him till the famine came: but then they were his good purveyors (as God would have it) that brought him all his proviſion. We ſhall never know what friends God will raiſe us up till we ſtand in need of them. God will be ſeen in the mount: that is, juſt in the time of extremity; for then is his opportunity.

David tells us that he had *never ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging bread. Pſal.* 37. 25. yet he ſaith, he was an old man when he made that obſervation. If his experience ſatisfie us not, let us conſult our own. Have we ſeen that which *David* never ſaw in this kind? Take but the ſeed of the righteous for their righteous ſeed, and give inſtance if you can of any of them that have wanted bread, or made a trade of begging it? As for vain prodigals: it is fit they ſhould be brought to huskes, and not have a belly full of them neither; nor is there any likelier way to bring them home. But it is not Gods manner to deal ſo with others, eſpecially at a time when there is bread ſtirring in the world; (I mean when there is no publick famine,

famine, or when the earth yields its increase as at other times.)

If God bring famine upon a Nation: if he turn a fruitful Land into barrenness; I cannot say, but in that case some truly righteous persons may die by famine (as well as others by pestilence) but there are several things to relieve us against that kind of fear.

First, the case of famine is rare and extraordinary. Few rich men torment themselves with fear of want; though if a famine come, such as was in *Samaria*, they must want bread as well as others; because it will not be to be had for love or money. But think they God seldom visits a people with cleanness of teeth, or comes riding to them upon his pale horse, to kill with hunger, as it is *Rev.6.* 8. and why should we torment our selves with fear that he will do so?

Again, if good men perish in and by a common famine, it is because they faile in some, or other condition to which the promises of being kept alive in famine, are made; as namely, they want faith to trust God for bread in a time of famine, and so it comes to pass that they want bread: but if that and other conditions on which the promises of supplies are suspended were performed by them; God would sooner rain down bread from heaven, than suffer them to starve. So that you see good men have a conditional security for bread, even in a time of famine. But in case, through their failing in some part of that condition, any of them should come short of the promise; here is this to comfort them, that if God do bring them to huskes, yea to want a belly-full of huskes, who yet are no prodigals,

prodigals; that is no unrighteous or ungodly perſons (as to the main) it is for no worſe an intent than to fetch them home, ſo much the ſooner to their Fathers houſe, where is fulneſs of bread; that is, to heaven where is fulneſs of joy. But methinks the extremity of Mens fear as to want, might be taken off, by conſidering that if they be but diligent, frugal, mercifully inclined, but eſpecially if the true fear of God be before their eyes, they need not doubt of bread, according to the experience of Gods dealing with others, ſave only in time of Famine: nor ſhall they want it then, if they have but hearts to truſt God for it. If there be bread in the Land, you ſhall have part of it. If you can ſhow no inſtances to the contrary, why ſhould you not believe it? If there be no bread in the Land, but an univerſal Famine; rich men muſt want as well as you, who yet fear no want, becauſe they perplex not themſelves with the ſuppoſal of a Famine, which they hope never to ſee.

A little more to ſhame our miſtruſt of Gods giving us food and raiment. Let me quote one other Text, and it is *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his only Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Had we not a World of unbelief to deale withall, many things I have ſaid in this Chapter, might have been ſpared: but as the caſe ſtands with many, all I doubt is little enough to ſhore up, and to under-prop their tottering faith; which knows not how to truſt God, no not for food and raiment. We little think how we reproach and undervalue God, whilſt we ſuſpect that he will not ſo much as feed and cloath us.

Doth

Doth not the Scripture ſay, that our Maker is our husband? If a Woman marry a rich Man able to maintain her liberally, and yet vex her ſelf with a conceipt, that he will not finde her things neceſſary, and think he can never give her promiſes and aſſurances enough, that ſhe ſhall never want cloathes and victuals whilſt he lives, what a woſull diſparagement would he take it for? you think me very cruel, unnatural and ſordid, (would he ſay) and though that thought be without ground, I know not how to perſwade you otherwiſe. It is not uſual with Parents to promiſe their children over and over that they will not ſtarve them, the children that have honeſt and able Parents uſe to take that for granted. It is only our unbelief that hath extorted from God ſo many promiſes of that nature, whereby though we greatly diſhonour him, yet is he pleaſed to condiſcend to our weakneſs. Where ſhall we find faith to believe thoſe words, *Luk.*12.32. *It is your Fathers pleaſure to give you the Kingdome*: if in the mean time we cannot truſt God for ſo much as food and raiment? poſſibly we ſhall have it but from hand to mouth: to day ſhall take no care of to morrow; but then to morrow ſhall take care of it ſelf. Sufficient for the day ſhall be the ſupply, as well as the trouble thereof.

Lord ſith then I have promiſes, providences, experience of thy dealing with others, conſideration of divine attributes and relations, with ſeveral other things to ſecure me againſt the feare of abſolute want: let me never diſhonour thee, or perplex my ſelf with the thoughts of any ſuch thing. Let my only care be to live in my

Fathers

Fathers houſe, and to carry my ſelf alwayes as in his ſight, and I ſhall never want a belliful of huskes, nor yet have meer husks, (for thou feedeſt not thy children like ſwine) wherwith to fill my belly. Every thing that is good is not good for me: neither is the beſt of earthly things alwayes beſt for me, (no more than the beſt liquors are for him that is in a feaver.) Give me to walk in integrity before thee, and then I know thou wilt give me every thing that is good for me: for thy promiſe is, to give grace and glory, and that no good thing wilt thou with-hold from them that walk uprightly. Can I expect to *eat bread in the Kingdome of God*, as the phraſe is, *Luke* 14. 15. and think that God will not give me bread to eat in this World? can I believe I ſhall be one day *cloathed upon with an houſe which is from heaven*, as it is called, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. and yet think that God will deny me ſuch cloathing, as my body ſtands in need of? he hath given *life, is not that more than meat*; *a body*, is not that *more than raiment*, *Mat.* 6. 25. he that hath given the greater, will he not give that which is leſs? *Our Heavenly Father knows we have need of food and raiment*, whilſt we are in this World, and cannot live without it, *verſ.* 32. Lord give me but to truſt in thee, and to do good: and as thou haſt ſaid, ſo I believe, verily I ſhall be fed.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of a good conſcience being a continual feaſt.

HOwever it comes to paſs, the vulgar (and ſeemingly miſtaken) quotation of the cloſe of

of that verſe, *Prov.* 15. 15. *viz.* in theſe words, *A good conſcience is a continual feaſt*, ſounds much more ſpiritually, and like a ſaying of the Holy Ghoſt, than doth that tranſlation which is uſually given us, *viz.* in theſe expreſſions, *He that is of a merry heart, hath a continual feaſt*; which they that know no mirth but that which *Salomon* calls madneſs, will be apt to wreſt to a very bad ſenſe. The word tranſlated merry, is in the Hebrew *Tob*, which ſignifieth good, which is a better word in common acceptation than is the word merry: (for that is but too liable to an ill conſtruction) & may I take liberty to alter but that one word, and render the Hebrew Text *verbatim* word for word: A good heart, a continual feaſt; when we have compared it with the context, it wil eaſily enough appear that the true ſenſe and meaning is, that which is generally underſtood by ſuch a ſaying as this, in that a good conſcience is a continual feaſt. For (if I miſtake not) that Proverb is ſeldom uſed; but by a good conſcience is intended, a conſcience not accuſing, but excuſing; not teſtifying againſt us, but with us, and for us, a conſcience ſpeaking peace, and ſuch as is a comfort and a rejoycing to us. That *Salomon* by a good heart doth intend ſuch a conſcience as that; the oppoſition in the foregoing words ſeemeth to imply; *All the daies of the afflicted are evil: but a good heart, &c.* intimating thereby, as if good were here oppoſed to grieved, wounded, afflicted: which interpretation is alſo countenanced by what followeth, *ver.* 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treaſure and trouble therewith*, probably meaning trouble of mind and conſcience for the ill get-

ing

ing of it; for other kind of trouble there may be where there is but a little, and that both gotten and enjoyed in the fear of God. And now we know what it is that *Solomon* here ſtileth a continual feaſt, we may be able to ſpeak to thoſe who having with *Dives* fared deliciouſly every day (which now they are not able to do as formerly) think it cold comfort to be told of meer food and raiment, and would be fain feaſting again, if they had wherewithall. Feaſt we may, and that not only now and then, but every day in the year, and every hour of the day, (and upon greater delicacies than any feaſt commonly ſo called conſiſts of) if we can but get that good conſcience *Solomon* ſpeaks of to feaſt withall. Indeed there is no contentment but a good conſcience, our bodies admit not of a continual feaſt: but our ſou's do. A full ſtomack loathes the honey comb. But there is no ſatiety in thoſe dainties, which conſcience feeds upon: much leſſe can we ſurfeit with them. As thoſe that have but almoſt dined, feel no troubleſome ſenſe of hunger, and yet could eat more: ſo a good conſcience, though it have that already, which may ſuffice, yet is alwaies left with a wholſome appetite.

What can be deſired, or what is ever enjoyed in a feaſt, but good chear, good company, good diſcourſe, mirth, muſick (now and then) as an help to mirth, and above all hearty welcome? I am deceived if a good conſcience do not afford all and every of theſe. Good meats and good drinks are that we count good chear, and if our meats and drinks be both for health and delight, then do we account them good. A good conſci-

ence affords both meats and drinks, (as they may properly enough be called) as wholesome and as delightfull as can be wished. Meats and drinks, such as our bodies feed upon, there are none in Heaven. Yet something so called there is, else why is there mention of *eating bread in the kingdome of God? Luke* 14. 15. or why doth Christ speak of *drinking of the fruit of the Vine new in the kingdome of his father? Mat.* 26. 29. The bread of comfort, the Wine of joy, is that which Saints and Angels feast upon in Heaven; and the same for kind, though not for degree is that of a good conscience. It spreads a Table with first, second and third course. Its presenting us with a well-grounded perswasion of our being delivered from the wrath to come, as the Apostle saith, we are not appointed to wrath, that is as it were the first course: it's witnessing that we are not only not children of wrath; (which alone would be a great comfort to be assured of) but also that we are the children of God, (as the spirit of God is said to witness with the spirits of Gods children) that is the second: and then its telling us that it is our fathers pleasure to give us, even us, a kingdome, and causing us to rejoyce in hope of the glory of God, that is the third.

Nor is a good conscience better chear than it is good company. As a bad conscience is the worst companion in the World: so a good conscience is the very best, unless it be God himself. He that hath it, is many times never less solitary than when he is most alone, that is the best company that is both profitable and pleasant: and so is a good conscience; it hath that property of a good companion, amongst others, it will finde

good

good and pleasant discourse. What *Solomon* speaks concerning the Law of God, taught by parents to their children, *Prov. 6. 22. When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou awakest it shall talk with thee.* So will a good conscience. An evil conscience findes such discourse as men have not patience to hear, like *Micaiah*, it never prophesieth good: but a good conscience commends without flattery, and tells those stories that would not be grievous to a man to listen to from morning to night. It speaks like God in his sentence of Absolution, well done good and faithful Servant. No man can frame a discourse so delightful, as are the whispers of a good conscience, speaking peace and pardon to us in the name of God. Where such company and such discourse is, there can want no mirth, taking mirth in the sobereſt sense, for comfort and refreshment; yea it will make the heart more glad than they whose wine and oile increase.

And as for musick; all the voices and instruments in the World cannot make such melody as a good conscience. If a man had all those *Men-singers*, and *Women-singers* that *Solomon* had, *Eccles.* 2. 8. their best notes were not comparable to this.

Nor is it hard to make out how a good conscience can and doth give a man hearty welcome. For as Christ in several senses is both Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice: so is that, both our feast, and our Host, our entertainer, and our entertainment. Conscience doth as it were grudge a wicked man, both his meat and his mirth, but to a good man it saith, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for the

Lord accepteth thy perſon. Conſcience bids much good may do him with all he hath, and tells him in the name of God, he is as welcome to it as his heart can wiſh, and hath it with as good a will. We count thoſe men beſt able to feaſt, that have as we ſay every thing about them and within themſelves, Corne, Cattel, Poultry, all of their own, Dove-houſes, Warrens, Parks all within their own grounds, Ponds affording ſeveral ſorts of fiſh, Trees yielding all ſorts of fruits, &c. Such is he that hath a good conſcience, he hath all materials for feaſting within himſelf, and therefore may afford to do it, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good Man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf. Viz.* from the conſciouſneſs of his own integrity. As *Paul* ſaith, this is our rejoycing, *viz.* the teſtimony of our conſcience, &c. *He* that hath this, hath meat to eat that the World knows not of, and ſuch meat as he would not exchange for all the rarities and varieties that are at Emperors Tables. *He* bleſſeth himſelf, or rather God, when he thinks how much happier he is than the World takes him for, and how much better he fares than the World knows of: whereas they do or may bluſh, and inwardly bleed to think how much happier they are thought to be than indeed they are. I might add, he that feaſts upon a good conſcience, hath that kinde of meat which is alſo ſawce for every thing, whereas others have the ſame ſawce that ſpoiles all their ſweet meat.

But poſſibly I cannot ſay more of the happineſs of a good conſcience, than many can eaſily believe, from the experience of a bad one, and the miſery they have felt by meanes of it. A good

con-

conſcience think they were an excellent feaſt indeed if we had it. There is none like that, but as *Saul* ſaid, the *Philiſtims* were come up againſt him, and God was departed; ſo they, The Fire is come up againſt them, and hath taken away what they feaſted on before; and as for a good conſcience they wiſh they had it, but they have it not. Such a ſound ſpirit would bear their infirmities, but for want of it, they are not able to bear them. Were I ſure ſuch men were in good earneſt, to look after that good conſcience which they confeſs and complain they want; I would tell them for their encouragement, that there is a way for a bad, yea a very bad conſcience, to be made good; as well as a good one to be made better. Who can think that *Paul* had alwaies a good conſcience? the Scripture telling us that he was ſometimes a perſecuter, an injurious perſon, and a blaſphemer; yea, *that he did compell others to blaſpheme. Acts* 26. 12. conſidering that he had his hand in the death of many of Gods Saints. *Acts* 26. 12. *Many of the Saints did I ſhut up in priſon, and when they were put to death I gave my voice againſt them.* But manifeſt it is, that he had a good conſcience afterwards; therefore I ſay there is a way for a very bad conſcience to be made very good, and bleſſed be God there is ſo.

It is againſt Scripture to ſay, that a conſcience once deflowred can never recover its virginity. He who himſelf was born of a virgin, can reduce that conſcience to a virgin ſtate, which hath been the mother of many hainous ſins. *Heb.* 9. 14. *If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ſprinkling the aſhes of an heifer ſanctifieth to the purifying*

rifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ sanctifie your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? It is sin alone that defiles the conscience, and makes it evil: Now sin is either immediately against God, or immediately against our neighbour, that is, against men: and that also is against God ultimately, though not firstly and only. Therefore *David* confessing his sin in the matter of *Uriah*, saith to God, *Against thee have I sinned.* He that would have a good (that is, a pure and peaceable conscience) must, if he be able, satisfie men for the wrongs and injuries done to them: as *Zacheus* resolved to do; or if he be not able, he must be sincerely willing and desirous so to do, and fully purpose it in his heart, if God shall ever make him able. For *nisi restituatur oblatum* is an old and a true rule (that is, either actually or intentionally) *non remittitur peccatum.* But as for the injury done to God by sin, either immediately or mediately, that no meere man is able to satisfie for, though he could give thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oile, or would give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul: Therefore as to that there is no way to get our sins carried into the land of forgetfulnes, but by laying them by faith upon the head of *Christ*, who was tipified by the Scape-goat under the Law; no satisfaction to be tendered for them, but that which *Christ* our surety hath made and intended for the use and benefit of them; and them only who do or shall believe in him, and by repentance turn from dead works to serve the living God (*Col.* 1. 14. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*

When

When these things are once done, namely, when care hath been taken to satisfie men, so far as we are able, for the wrongs done to them: when we have looked upon him whom we have pierced by sin, and truly mourned, when we have confessed our sins, and forsaken them, both actually for the present, and in sincere resolution for ever after: and when we have lifted up an eye of faith to *Christ*, as to the antitype of that brazen serpent, which was lifted up in the wilderness, as he that is able to take out the sting of sin out of the fiery serpent; and by faith laid hold upon his grace, as upon the horns of an altar: I say, when this is done, then is that conscience which was bad, become purely good; and when we can reflect upon what we have done, then do they become not only pure but peaceable, and consequently good upon all accounts. Now I see not what notion can be more comfortable to those that have brought a bad conscience into a bad condition than this, that a conscience extreamly bad may be made good: that which is impure may become very pure; and that which is unquiet, may become calm and peaceable, yea full of joy and triumph.

This premised, I think it no hard matter to tell many a man how he may be much more happie in a mean and impoverished condition, than he had wont to be in midst of all his plenty and prosperity. Get but a good conscience instead of a bad one: Get but peace within, (*viz.* that peace which passeth all understanding:) get but the pardon of thy sins, and the well-grounded perswasion of that pardon: get but a vi-

ſion of thy ſins as drowned in the red ſea of Chriſt his blood: get but to look upon God as thy friend and father, and upon death as none of thine enemie (and where it is no enemy, it is and will be a great friend;) get but the Spirit of God to witneſs with thy ſpirit that thou art the childe of God: get but this for thy rejoycing, which *Paul* had, *viz.* the teſtimony of thy conſcience, &c. and let me be miſerable for thee, if thou who haſt wanted theſe things in times paſt, when thou hadſt the world at will, when once poſſeſt hereof, doſt not become more happie in the enjoyment of meer food and raiment, than ever thou wert formerly, when waters of a full cup were wrung out unto thee. Some have ſaid, Bread and the Goſpel are good cheere: It is as true, that brown bread and a good conſcience are ſo. He that hath thoſe two, will finde no cauſe he hath to complain. And as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 33. 24. *The inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick: the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity*: ſo neither will men repine that they are poor and deſpicable, and otherwiſe afflicted, if they come but once to know for certain that they are pardoned.

The true reaſon why many men do want ſo many outward good things, as namely, ſo much wine, ſo much company, ſo much recreation, &c. is becauſe they want better conſciences: had they more of a good conſcience, to cheare and to refreſh them, they would need leſs of other things. If *Saul* had not been poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit, he had not wanted *David* to have plaied to him upon the Harp, 1 *Sam.* 16. 16. One ſaith, that *the life of a wicked man is a continual Diverſion.*

ſion. If men were not wicked, they would not need the one half of thoſe diverſions which they betake themſelves to, as reliefs againſt the ſting of an evil conſcience. Notable is that counſel of the *Apoſtle*, *Eph.* 5.18. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs: but be ye filled with the ſpirit.* v.19. *making melody in your hearts to the Lord.* When men want the comforts of Gods Spirit, and melody in their own hearts, they would ſupply that defect, if they knew how, with more than ordinary refreſhments, from thoſe good comforts of God which do gratifie and entertain their ſenſes; and thence probably it is that St. *Jude* joines thoſe two together, *Jude* 19. *Senſual, having not the Spirit.* They that frequently uſe Cordials, are ſuppoſed to be apt to faintings: for others had rather let them alone. Wine is obſerved to be a narcotick or ſtupifying thing, (witneſs the pronenes of men to fall aſleep when they have drunk freely of it) and it is to be feared, that many do uſe it but as opium to conſcience. Now as Phyſitians ſay, the body is much endangered by the over-frequent uſe of opiates, natural opiates; ſo is the ſoul much more by thoſe things which caſt it for the preſent into a dead ſleep; for they do but keep that worm from gnawing at the preſent, which will afterwards gnaw ſo much the more, and never die; ſtupifying things remove not a diſeaſe, but fix it ſo much the more.

I ſee then, O Lord, what men muſt do if they would not only think themſelves happy, but be ſo indeed, if they would not be like hungry men that dream they eat, but finde themſelves empty when they awake, or thirſty men that dream

dream of drink, but awake and finde themselves deceived. *Isa.* 29. 8. If they would feast in good earnest, it must be by means of a good and quiet conscience. That men may want though they have houses full of Gold and Silver: that men may have, though Gold and Silver they have none. Riches cannot give it: poverty cannot hinder it. I am or would be at a point, whether my body feast at all, more or less; but for my soul, I desire not only a good meale now and then, but that continual feast of a conscience both pure and peaceable. I prefer that to all the far fetcht and dear bought varieties of fish, flesh, and fowle, which are at Princes tables. I see then men need not bid adieu to feasting, or reckon upon a bare commons after all the spoile this fire hath made. They need only change their diet for that which is much better than they had wont to live upon, and they may feast hereafter ten times for once they did heretofore, and be said in a nobler sense than ever *Dives* was, to fare sumptuously every day. Peace of conscience is *a feast of fat things, full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined*, as I may allude to *Isa.* 25. 16.

DISCOURSE VII.

Of getting, and living upon a stock of spiritual comforts.

AS it fareth with children whose nurses have milk enough in both breasts, but one is much

much hardet to be drawn than the other; they would willinglie lie altogether or moſtlie at that breaſt which may be drawn with moſt eaſe: ſo with many Chriſtians who have an intereſt both in Spiritual and temporal things, wherewith to ſolace themſelves, they are too too prone to live upon the breaſt of their worldlie comforts, which may be ſuckt (as it were) by ſenſe; rather than upon that of their Spiritual priviledges and advantages; which breaſt (though much the ſweeteſt and fulleſt) can no otherwiſe be drawn than by the exerciſe of faith. Now ſad experience convinceth us, that it is much more hard to exerciſe our faith, than to uſe our ſenſes; even as to draw water out of a deep well with a heavie bucket, is nothing like ſo eaſie, as to fetch it out of a ciſtern, where 'tis but turning the cock and the work is done.

The objects of faith are things remote, and the eye of faith is in its kind more weak than that of ſenſe: and to a weak eye it is much more difficult to view things that are at a great diſtance, than thoſe that are neer at hand. The advantage of a high place, a clear day, and (it may be) of a proſpective-glaſs to boot, may be all little enough to make us diſcerne thoſe things which are afar off: but without any ſuch helps, we can eaſily eſpie thoſe things which are cloſe by us; as are the objects of ſenſe compared with thoſe of faith. Why did that good man cry out, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief?* Mark 9. 24. but that he found difficulty in the exerciſe of faith? How came it to paſs that *Chriſt* upbraided his eleven Diſciples all at once for their unbelief? Mark 16. 14. but for the ſame

reaſon.

reason? They did not believe those that said they had seen *Christ*, after he was risen (though he had told them he would rise again the third day) but had they seen him themselves they would not have doubted of it.

The exercise of our faith is opposed by sin and sathan; so is not the use of our senses. Now men finding it no easie thing to set faith on work, and to keep that hand in ure, and in action, without which they cannot fetch in the comfort of their spiritual priviledges (for the Scripture speaking of *Christ* saith, *In whom believing, we rejoyce*; intimating, that without faith there can be no true rejoycing in *Christ*) and speaking of faith, saith, that *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*; implying, that such things are no otherwise reallized and evidenced to us than by faith, and consequently no otherwise the matter of our joy than as faith makes them so. I say, men finding it so hard a work to believe, and to fetch in their comfort that way; too often content themselves with that meaner and lower kind of comfort, which more easily flows in upon them, and which doth as it were follow them as the rock, meaning the waters out of the rock are said to have followed the *Israelites* in the wilderness. Hence it is that whilst the world smiles upon them, they are apt like the fool in the Gospel, to sing *requiems* to their souls, because they have laid up in store for many years, and their barns are full. And hence it is that when God doth strip such men of earthly enjoyments, and as it were dry up that breast; even many good men are for the present at a very

Heb. 11. 1.

very great loſs: not that they want intereſt in better things than are taken from them, but becauſe they have diſuſed themſelves from ſucking at that harder, but ſweeter breaſt, which God hath provided for them, and doth alwayes continue to them. They have not accuſtomed themſelves to live by faith, and now they are to ſeek how to do it. Theſe men of might for the preſent cannot finde their hands: As we grow up we forget to ſuck, becauſe we have not uſed it of a long time, and ſo in this caſe.

How neceſſary is it then for Chriſtians, even whilſt earthly enjoyments laſt, to inure themſelves to live upon the hopes and expectations of heavenly good things? As Popiſh Prieſts put off the Laity with but one element, giving them the bread in the Sacrament, but denying them the Cup (which is as due to them, and rather more refreſhing:) ſo do many ſerve themſelves; feeding upon the bread of their temporal poſſeſſions, whilſt they refrain the wine of thoſe bleſſed hopes and expectations (as to another world) which belong unto them. But how much better were it for them to receive in both kinds? It is good (as our Proverb ſaith) for men *to have two ſtrings to their bowe.* What great heire contents himſelf with thinking only of that ſmall allowance which he enjoys, being under age, and doth not pleaſe himſelf with muſing how much greater things he is like to enjoy hereafter? who that hath both Viol and Lute, and can play excellently upon both, would let his Lute, which is the ſweeter inſtrument of the two, hang by the walls and uſe his Viol only, becauſe that is eaſier to be played upon of the two? Who would pluck only

only the ſowriſh grapes which are at the bottom of his Vine, becauſe they are next at hand, and mean time neglect thoſe ripe cluſters, which are at the top, becauſe he cannot reach them without a ladder, and the pains of climbing? he enjoyes not the one half of what he might, who lives only or moſtly upon the worſer half of his enjoyments; like a man that ſhould alwayes live in one of his houſes, every way leſs convenient and pleaſant, and ſuffer another that doth far tranſcend it to ſtand alwayes empty.

To what end hath the ſpirit of God made any of us to know the things that are freely given us of God, if we ſolace not our ſelves with the remembrance and conſideration thereof? even then when God hath filled our cup with worldly good things, if not made it to run over. Should we draw waters from thoſe upper Springs whilſt the neather flow plentifully? and are we not as much or more concerned to do it, when the neather ſprings are dried up? when the Fig-tree bloſſomes not, and there is no herd in the ſtall, woe unto us if we know not then (at leaſtwiſe then) how to rejoyce in the Lord; and joy in the God of our ſalvation: haſt thou intereſt in better things, and wilt thou not live upon the comfort of them: no not at a time when thou haſt nothing elſe in effect to live upon? what had become of *David* at *Ziglag*, if he had not *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*? So elſewhere, when *David* ſaw his houſe declining; (which made him ſay, though my houſe be not ſo with God) did he not comfort himſelf with this, that yet God had made with him an everlaſting Covenant? who brings not out his old gold and

precious

precious Jewels to help himself withall, when all he had besides, is spent or taken away? shall all creatures be wiser than we? Dogs know their remedies when surfeited, *viz.* that they call Dog-grass: and Toades, when poisoned, theirs (*viz.* Plantane) and fall to them, if they be to be had. Is not an interest in spiritual things, if we have that, the only relief we have in the loss of all our temporal comforts? and shall we not make use of it? if a man have white bread to eat, would he suffer himself to be starved, because he hath no brown? will he keep it up in his Cup-board when he hath nothing else to eat? if you have a sort of comforts to live upon, besides those which are taken from you, live upon them: never lie down and die whilst you have wherewithall to live, yea and to live nobly.

A stock of well-grounded spiritual comforts, or a well-bottomed hope of glory will maintain a man at a great rate, though he have little else; yea like a Prince, if it be well improved. Have you not known men live chearfully and joyfully upon the expectance of great things in reversion, though they have had but little in possession? One would think the assurance (or what is next to it) of a Crown and Kingdome, after a short time of suffering, should raise and revive us more than the present fruition of a great Lordship, being all that ever we look for. He that upon Scripture-grounds believes himself to be an heir of heaven, let him but reflect upon what he believes, and that alone will be a heaven to him upon earth.

But do I not hear some say, they want a stock of spiritual comforts, or grounds of comfort; they

they have no upper Springs to fetch water from, none of those Rivers which make glad the City of God, and therefore it is that their hearts faile them in an evil day. Yea doubtless therefore it is that their hearts do faile them, because they either have not an interest in God, or if they have, they know it not. Now as that holy man said to his friend touching assurance, verily assurance is to be had, and what have we been doing all this while? so say I to you, verily an interest in God is to be had, and see that you labour for it. It was a great fault and oversight not to look after it whilst we had a confluence of other good things: but now other things are taken away, it were utter madness to neglect it. From this time forward make it thy business to get an interest in eternal mercies, the sure mercies of *David*, and to know that thine interest; and then live upon the comfort of it: and then thou that never hadst it before, though God have cast thee (as it were) from the throne to the dunghil, even upon that dunghill shalt thou live better than ever thou didst in all thy life before. Doubtless a man may live more happily upon a great deale of assurance, having but a small pittance of other things, than upon great abundance of worldly enjoyments, having little or no assurance.

O Lord my heart deceives me, if the consolations of God be small with me (or in my accompt) if I could not live more contentedly upon bread and water, with calling and election made sure, than they who have their portion in this life, do when their Corn and Wine increase. Oh why do I press no harder after that which I take my

self

ſelf to have ſo great a value for? That is the only thing that makes me fear, leaſt my heart ſhould in this caſe deceive me. For it is not that God hath been wanting to incourage the endeavours of men in purſuite of ſpiritual and eternal mercies, ſo that we ſhould have cauſe to fear our labour would be in vain; for hath he not declared he is a rewarder of all them that ſeek him diligently? and that *to them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek glory, he will give eternal life, Rom.* 2. And what more could have been ſaid?

I ſee then there are three ſorts of men. Some have matter and ground-work for ſpiritual joy, but will not take pains to improve it; they have (as it were) the breaſt in their mouths, but will not draw it, becauſe the milk is hard to come by, that is, they have good evidences for heaven, but will not trouble themſelves to clear them up; and to be ever and anon reviewing and reading them over. Lord if I be one of them, give me to ſee how much I ſtand, and have ſtood in my own light, how much I have leſſened my comforts by grudging my paines, how I might have doubled and trebled my joyes, if the fault had not been my own, others there are that content themſelves with a portion in this life, ſeeing and knowing themſelves as yet to have no intereſt in better things. Lord how deſperately do they adventure? how great a hazard do they run? If death ſhould come and finde them provided only for this preſent World, what would become of them? And yet there is a ſort of men more deſperate than theſe, (if more can be) and they are thoſe who are deſtitute of this World's good things, and yet neither have an intereſt in

ſpiritual comforts, nor yet regard to have any. God hath taken the World from them, and poſſibly will never give it them again, do what they can, and yet they look not after that better portion that can never be taken away from them. To ſuch I may ſay, not only what will they do in their latter end, but what will they do at preſent, what ſhift can they make ſo much as for the preſent? can men live of nothing? without either heaven, or earth, God, or the creature, comforts for either ſoul or body? where are they but in hell, who are neither in heaven nor yet upon the earth? (in the World I mean) Surely ſuch men care not what becomes of them. I cannot better compare them to any thing than to a ſhip turned adrift in a mighty ſtorm, whoſe Pilot ſteeres her no longer, but expoſeth her to the mercy of winds and waves, and rocks, and ſands, and it is a thouſand to one if ever ſhe get ſafe to harbour. Lord of all ſorts of men, let me be none of this laſt. Let me ſecure one World at leaſt, and if but one, let it be the World to come. The more thou abridgeſt me of earthly comforts; the more inſatiable let me be in my deſires of thoſe that are heavenly? The more hungry thou keepeſt me, as to a ſupply of earthly things, the more thirſty let me be after thoſe rivers of pleaſure, which are at thy right hand for ever more. O Lord, if I want a ground-work for ſpiritual joy, a root of peace within my ſelf, let me want it no longer; if I have a foundation for joy within me, but know it not: oh thou who haſt given me to have it, give me alſo to know it; and when I once know it, give me often to review and recollect it,

it, to ruminate and chew the cud upon it, that I may enjoy the ſweetneſs of that, whereof I am really poſſeſt; that I may eat the fruit of the Vineyard, which thou haſt planted within me. Lord truſt me with a ſtock of ſpiritual comforts: with plenty of good hope thorough grace: kiſs me with the kiſſes of thy mouth, and let thy banner over me be love, and give me to ſit under the ſhaddow of thy favour with delight; and if ever I envy thoſe pittiful worldlings that have more of this than heart can wiſh, but no more of any World but this, if ever I be willing to change conditions with them, (all things conſidered) though they be wealthy, honourable, powerfull; I poor, mean, deſpicable: let me forfeit all again, yea take thou the forfeiture of all thy ſpiritual comforts again, which yet I would not thou ſhouldſt do for ten thouſand Worlds.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Of its being a great mercy to moſt Men, that their lives are continued, though their livelihoods are greatly impaired.

I Have not forgotten the words of good *Elijah* when he fled into the Wilderneſs for fear of *Jezabel*, who ſought his life, how he ſate him down under a Juniper Tree, and requeſted for himſelf that he might die, and ſaid, *It is enough now oh Lord, take away my life*, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. Nor yet the words of *Job* to the ſame effect. *Chap.* 7. 15. *My ſoul chooſeth ſtrangling and death*

rather than life; nor yet that peremptory answer of *Jonah*, when God asked him if he did well to be angry for the gourd? who told God to his face, *He did well to be angry, even unto death*, *Jonah* 4. 9. These things are not recorded in honour of any of these three Men, but as *David* speaks of himself; I said this is my infirmity: so may we say, these were their infirmities; they were good men, but these were bad expressions, and are delivered to us, not for our imitation, but for our warning and caution; and as the *Apostle* speaks in another case, 1 *Cor.* 10, 6. *These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.* But how incident is it to us to do the same thing, even to wish for death, when God hath deprived us of many comforts of life, which formerly we enjoyed: as if it were not worth while to live, unless it be in wealth, honour and prosperity.

This is such a pernicious error, that I am very zealous to confute it, and to establish that useful principle which is contrary to it; namely, that to escape with our lives is a very great mercy; though we have no such comfortable livelihoods as we had wont to have: yea though a bare livelihood or meer subsistence be all we have. *Job* saith in one place, *I am escaped with the skin of my teet*, *Job* 19. 20. meaning very poor and bare. As *Deodate* parallels it with a proverb some use, that *such a one hath nothing left him but his teeth.* Though it may seem a paradox, yet it is a very truth; that it is a great mercy to most people living under the Gospel, to escape (*viz.* death and the grave) though it be but with the skin of their teeth: that is, in as bare a condition

as

as bare can be, and live; to live, though it be under poverty, disgrace, restraint, and many evils more. Whilst the pride and passion of Men suggest the contrary: Nature it self gives them the lie, and votes for living, when they vote for death: as *the fable of the Countrey-man*, doth ingenuously intimate, *who being weary with his bundle of sticks, laid it by, sate down and wished for death: death over hearing him, came and desired to know what he had to say to him. Nothing, replyed the Country-man, but that thou wouldst help me up with my burthen.* Shewing that he was more willing to take up his burthen again, than to lay down his life. Why should a *Man give all he hath for his life*, (*Job* 1.) if life be nothing worth, when all a man hath is gone? Were the enjoyment of honour, riches, pleasure, the only or the greatest end of life: when those were once taken away, it would be scarce worth while to live; nay death might be more elegible of the two: but seeing the great ends of life are such things, as are as much within the reach of those that are poor, despised, afflicted, and that *never eat with pleasure*, as the phrase is, *Job* 21.25. As those who are rich, renowned, abounding with pleasures, *whose breasts are full of milk, and their bones moistned with marrow, who are wholly at ease and quiet*; as it is expressed, *Job* 21.23, 24. I say, forasmuch as the great ends of life are as pursuable, and as attainable by the former, as by the latter of these; as well the afflicted, as the prosperous ought to look upon the continuation of their lives, as a very great mercy.

Surely the great ends of life are; that whilst it is called to day we should mind the things that

concern our eternal peace: that *we ſhould ſeek after God, if haply by ſeeking after him we may finde him out*, *Acts* 17. 27. That we ſhould *lay up a good foundation for the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19. That we ſhould now ſowe what we deſire hereafter to reape, *viz. To the ſpirit, that we may of the ſpirit reape life everlaſting*, *Gal.* 6. 8. *that we might fight a good fight, finiſh a good courſe, keep the faith, and ſo become aſſured, that henceforth is laid up for us a crown of righteouſneſs*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. Theſe are the things which God did principally aime at in beſtowing life upon Men, and to which he would have all the good things that Men enjoy, ſubordinated: yea and all their evil things made ſome way or other ſubſervient: theſe are the greateſt improvements that can be made of our lives, and the beſt uſes we can turn them to; therefore theſe are the great ends of life. Had *Moſes* thought otherwiſe, he had not *eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt, greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: or choſen to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*, *Heb.* 11. 25. 26. *Job* could eaſily have anſwered that queſtion which himſelf puts, *Job* 3. 20. *Wherefore is life given to the bitter in ſoul which long for death, which are glad when they can finde the grave?* I ſay he could eaſily have anſwered his own queſtion, if he had not been in too great a paſſion; for he knew full well that the great ends of life were thoſe that I have mentioned, and therefore reſolved accordingly that *all the dayes of his warfare he would wait till his change ſhould come, viz.* preparing for it, as one that did remember, *that if a Man die, he*

ſhall

ſhall never live again, viz. to amend the errors, and to ſupply the defects of his former life, *Job* 14. 14. Now what ſhould hinder but that a poor Man may purſue ſuch ends of life, as well as one that is rich: yea the Scripture ſpeaks, as if it were *harder for a rich Man* of the two: *Luke* 15. 24. *when Jeſus ſaw that he was ſorrowfull, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the Kingdome of God? It is eaſier for a Camel to go thorough a Needles eye, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdome of God.* But if the poor man ſay; whilſt I ſeek the Kingdome of God, what ſhall I do for other things in the mean time? Let him take an anſwer from our Saviours mouth, *Mat. 6. 33. Seek ye firſt the Kingdome of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, and all other things ſhall be added unto you.*

I have ſpoken to the great ends of life, and the attainableneſs of them, as well by perſons of low as of high degree. But alas how few in compariſon of the lump of mankind, or of Men called Chriſtians, have yet attained thoſe ends for which they live. *viz.* have laid up a good foundation for eternity, &c. and they are yet fewer who are able to ſay they have done it. For ſome may have attained thereunto, and yet not know it. How unſafely do they die, who die before they have attained the ends for which they did live? and how uncomfortably muſt they alſo die, who die before they know they have attained them? Therefore I ſay it is a great mercy to the greateſt part of Men and Women to be reprieved from Death, and from the Grave. *David* as good a Man as he was, beg'd hard for this, *Pſal.* 39. 13. *O ſpare me that I may recover*

ſtrength, before I go hence and be no more; yet was his condition at that time very afflicted, for he ſaith, *verſ.* 10. *Remove thy ſtroke from me, I am conſumed by the blow of thine hand*, verſ. 11. *when thou doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth.* Which he ſeems to ſpeak of, as his own caſe at that time, when he cried out, O ſpare me before I go hence. Is it not with moſt people in the World, as with idle Boyes in a School, at a time when their Maſter is abſent? when it is almoſt time to give over, they have ſcarce lookt into their books, or done any thing they came for, but played all the while? How neceſſary is it for ſuch Men to live a little longer? How ſad would it be with them, if God ſhould ſay to them, as to that ſecure fool: This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee? were they ſenſible of their own concernment, would not ſuch men prize a little time in the World, as thoſe poor *Levellers* did, that were ſhot at *Burford* about ten years ſince: *Oh that they might live but one day, or but one hour longer to enjoy thoſe Ordinances of God, which they had formerly deſpiſed*: or as ſhe that in horrour cried out upon her death-bed; *Call time again, call time again*? If life be neceſſary for thee, as (if thou haſt not yet attained the ends of life, I am ſure it is more neceſſary for thee than any worldly thing) by how much it is more neceſſary that thou ſhouldſt be ſaved, than that thou ſhouldſt be rich or honourable. I ſay if life be more neceſſary for thee than riches and honour, and any thing of this World, as it is, becauſe upon that moment eternity depends: then haſt thou cauſe to look upon it as a great mercy, and to be very thankfull for it.

May

May it not be ſaid of ſome men that are dead & gone, that if they had died but one year, or one moneth ſooner, they had been damned? The laſt year, or the laſt moneth was more to them than all their life before, for that they were born (I mean born again) not long before they died. He that can cauſe *the earth to bring forth in one day; and a Nation to be born at once. Iſa. 66. 8.* How great a change can he make in the ſouls of men in a very ſhort time? Yea, I remember an excellent Divine of our own, hath a paſſage to this purpoſe, *viz. That one day ſpent in ſerious meditation of God and Chriſt, the joyes of Heaven, the torments of Hell, the evil of ſin, the excellency of grace, the vanity of the creature, the neceſſity of regeneration, and ſuch like things, might contribute more to the converſion and ſalvation of a ſinner, than all that hath been done by him in all the time paſt of his life, though poſſibly he hath lived many years in the world.* We ſhall never know what the worth of life, and of time is, till we come to improve it to thoſe high ends and purpoſes for which God hath chiefly given it; as namely, unto making our calling and election ſure, &c. but when we have done, finding how great a pleaſure a little time hath done us; of what unſpeakable uſe and advantage it hath been to us, we ſhall reckon our ſelves more bound to God for it than for any other temporal enjoyment; we ſhall think a little time (to ſpeak in the language of our *Proverb*) to have been *worth a Kings ranſome.* Conſider life as an eſtate of hope, (as *Salomon* ſaith, *Eccleſ. 9. 4. To all the living there is hope*) and death to the wicked as a hopeleſs ſtate. *Job 27. 8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though*

he

he have gained; when God taketh away his ſoul? and then tell me if it be not a great mercy, but to live? But oh the baſe heart of man, that will not ſuffer him to know how great a mercy life is, becauſe it will not ſerve him to improve it! A life ſo ſpent as multitudes of people do ſpend theirs, will prove a curſe rather than a bleſſing, as having done little in it, but treaſured up wrath againſt the day of wrath. Nor is it ever to be expected that they will bleſs God for life, who have cauſe to curſe the time that they have lived (though all thorough their own default.)

He that would comfort himſelf in the thoughts of his being yet alive, and take it for a great mercy that his life (though little elſe) is left him for a prey; let him ſit down and conſider, what earnings he may make of that time which is left him in the world, be it little or much. If from henceforth he ſhall ſet his face towards *Zion*: ſet out in the waies of godlineſs: give up his name to Chriſt: engage in the work he came into the world about: enter upon the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wiſdom; ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord with all his heart, or at leaſtwiſe repaire to the pool of *Betheſdah*, and wait there for cure; follow on to know the Lord, that he may know him: ſtrive to enter in at the ſtraight gate: dig for wiſdom as for ſilver, and for knowledge, as for hidden treaſure: make it his buſineſs that his ſoul may be ſaved in the day of the Lord; I ſay, whoſoever ſhall do ſo, and perſevere in ſo doing, will finde ſo happy a product of that work, whereunto he hath conſecrated and devoted the remainder

of

of his life, as will make him prize and value one day so spent, more than many daies and moneths in which all the comfort of his life; (as he accounted it) came in by eating and drinking, and company-keeping; by hunting, hawking, dicing, carding, and such like divertisements. He will look upon that time as spent in damning his soul (as much as in him lay) but the other in saving it: and therefore he must needs value this more than that. One was a time of running into debt, the other of getting old scores paid off, or blotted out; and therefore must needs be the happier time of the two. One was a time of provoking his adversarie: the other a time of agreeing with his adversarie whilst he is yet in the way, *Matth.* 5. 25. or of kissing the Son, lest his wrath be kindled, and he should perish in the mid-way. When thou shalt begin to take acquaintance with thy closet, with thy Bible, with thy own heart, with the duties of meditation, prayer, self-examination, contemplation of heavenly things, to which thou hast formerly been a stranger: thou wilt confess thou didst but then begin to live, and that all thy time before, thou wert but like a dead body, assumed and carried about by an evil spirit; & wert altogether like the voluptuous widdow, of whom the *Apostle* saith, that *she is dead whilst she lives.*

I know but one sort of men that may reasonably look upon life to be less desireable as to them, than death: and that may justly reckon it a greater priviledge to die presently, than to live any longer; and they are those that can say with *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We know that if our house*

of

of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, eternal in the Heavens. Such only may with good reason have *mortem in desiderio*, that is, long to be dissolved: But yet they also must have *vitam in patientiâ*, that is, be content to live, though in the midst of trouble. But alas, how few of these are there in the Christian world; how rarely doth this flower of assurance grow, even in the garden of the Church; yea, and amongst those that are no weeds themselves?

Then bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me, bless his holy name; yea, let others praise the Lord with me, and let us magnifie his name together, that we are yet alive, though haply stript of many mercies and comforts of life, which we have formerly enjoyed. O Life! thou art sweet, though full of care and feare, and hardship, and trouble on ever side; because thou art a day of grace, a time of making our peace with God, and getting the assurances of his love. Art thou yet dead in sins and trespasses? go to Jesus Christ for soul-quicknings, and thou maist come to live spiritually, ere thou die temporally, and be secured withall from dying eternally. Hath God hid his face from thee hitherto? take a right course; and yet before thou diest, maiest thou see his face with joy. Hath he concealed himself from thee hitherto, and spoken roughly to thee, as *Joseph* to his brethren? (when he called them Spies;) yet, as he at last said to them, I am your brother *Joseph*: so may God to us, I am your father; I am he that blotteth out your sins for mine own names sake; though thou hast all

this

this while ſate in darkneſs, and as it were in the region of death; yet may the Lord be hence-forward a light to thee. Some render thoſe words, *Deut.* 34.5. *Moſes died upon the mouth of God* (as one deſcants) *God did as it were kiſs him into heaven*: ſo may he do by thee when thou commeſt to die. Maieſt thou not yet hear him ſaying to thee, as to his Church, *Iſa.* 54.11. *Oh thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted, I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and thy foundation with Saphires!* Lord thou knoweſt how to make me more thankful for life without health, wealth, eaſe, honour, liberty, friends, than ever I was for life in conjunction with all of theſe. Cauſe me to improve life to thoſe ends for which thou haſt given it; and give me a bleſſed fruit of that improvement: then ſhall I eaſily acknowledge that meerly to live with ſuch a heart, and for ſuch a purpoſe, is more valuable than without this, to live and ſwim in all the profits, pleaſures, and honours of this world.

DISCOURSE IX.

Of the comfort that may be received by doing good more than ever.

A Man may do more good at a time when he receives leſs. No man ever received leſs good from the world (or more evil) than *Chriſt* did; yet no man ever did more good in it, nor yet ſo much. *He went about doing good*, *Acts* 10. 38. yea, and it was *meat and drink to him*, *John* 4.34. that is, it was matter of great delight and comfort to him. There is a real pleaſure in doing, as well as receiving good, *Pſal.* 119.165.

Great

Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. It is surely a peace which passeth all understanding, that can guard the heart and mind against all that might otherwise offend. *David* had said, but just before, *Seven times a day do I praise thee* (which shews how well he imployed himself) and then he presently adds, *Great peace have they that love thy Law.* I have pitched upon this consideration, because there are some who since the Fire do even despaire of ever receiving so much good in and from the world as they have formerly done: from their trades, because they are lessned: their estates, because they are impaired; their friends, because they are impoverished. Now to such it may be a great relief; to think they may receive as much comfort by doing, as ever they have formerly done by receiving good: yea, and they may do as much good as ever they did (I do not say as ever they could) when yet they receive nothing like so much. Some Stars receive less light from the Sun, which yet give more light to the world: some smaller lights are greater luminaries; so may the world be better by us, and for us, than it had wont to be; when yet it was never so bad (that is so unkind and so unpleasant to us, and so straight-handed) as now it is.

There are more waies of doing good than with a mans purse onely (though that is one way in which all must do good that have it.) Men may do good with their heads, hearts, tongues, pens, lives: by their prayers, parts, graces, precepts, examples: most men have one talent or other wherewith to do good, though many have no hearts to use their talents, though they

they be many and great. Men of great eſtates do not alwaies keep the beſt houſes, or give the moſt relief to their poor neighbours; neither are the ableſt men in any kinde, alwaies the moſt uſeful and ſerviceable to the publick. Some perſons as able (it may be) as thoſe that write Volumes, have never once appeared in print; yea, ſome of meaner gifts have furniſhed the world with many uſeful Treatiſes; which ſhews that they who have received leſs, may do more for God, more for themſelves, more for the good of the Church, and of the world, than thoſe who have received a great deal more; who it may be are either over idle, or over-baſhful, or too much awed by that *Proverb*, *That he that comes in print, lies down and ſuffers every one that will to have a blow at him*; being over-tender of their reputations, like the delicate woman, that for delicacie will not ſet the ſole of her foot to the ground (leſt it ſhould be any waies ſoiled or ſullied) or hoping to ſeem greater by concealing themſelves; like thoſe Eaſtern Princes, that would not be ſeen of their ſubjects, becauſe they would not be known to be but men. Or as if that which *Salomon* ſaith, is the way for a fool to be thought wiſe, *viz.* by holding his peace, were alſo the way for a wiſe man to be thought wiſer. It is all in all in point of ſerviceableneſs, when men of but competent abilities do with the bleſſing of God ſet themſelves to do good, and to be uſeful, they out-ſerve many that out-ſhine them; and have more comfort in two talents wel improved, than others have in five that lie dead upon their hands. Some are all for the Rake, that is, what knowledge,

ledge, and other good things they can ſcrape together for themſelves: but thoſe that are for the Pitch-fork (in a good ſenſe) *viz.* for laying out, as well as laying up, ſhall have more peace. *A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good things. Matth.* 12. 35. What ſhould a woman do with full breaſts, if ſhe will not ſuffer them to be drawn? How many fine children hath ſome one poor woman brought up with her own breaſts, whilſt many gallant dames of ſtronger conſtitutions, and that might have made abler nurſes, never gave ſuck to one of their own children? Creatures without life do act *ad extremum virium*, the fire burns as much as ever it can burn: but ſo doth not mankind in many caſes, becauſe we limit the exerciſe of our power by the pleaſure of our wills: and therefore may be able to do more good in an afflicted, than ever we were willing to do, in a proſperous condition. The good which we receive may refreſh our ſenſes, but it is the good we do, that will more rejoyce our conſciences. *David* tells us, that *In keeping Gods commands there is great reward, Pſal.* 19. 11. Doing is a kind of giving, and the Scripture ſaith, *It is a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive.*

Lord, I deſire not to inſiſt upon it, that I may receive as much good as ever (temporal good I mean) but oh that thou wouldſt give me both an opportunity and an heart to do as much good, yea more than ever. I would pray, read, meditate, converſe with God, watch over my ſelf and others, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, ſupport the weak, fight againſt ſin, exerciſe grace, ſerve the Church of God

more

more than ever, or better than ever heretofore; and so doing, I am confident, that though my estate and worldly allowance be diminished; yet my real happiness and comfort shall be much enlarged.

DISCOURSE X.

Of abstracting from fancy, and looking at those that are below our selves, rather than at others.

TRy if it be not a meer fancy and conceipt of thine, that thou dost want any thing. Put case no man in the world had any thing better than what thou hast: no better meat to eat, or cloathes to weare, or house to dwell in; wouldst thou then finde any fault with thine own? or would it not serve thy turn very well? If thy reall wants were unsupplied, thou wouldst be sensible of them, though every body else were under the same want. If there were a famine upon the Land, thou wouldst feel hunger as much as if no body were deprived of bread but thy self, when indeed every body were in the same case. But if thy condition be such, as doth therefore only seem bad, because others have that which is better; thou art but fancy-sick, and under self-created misery. *Thou walkest in a vain shadow, and disquietest thy self in vain, Psal. 39.6.* Thou wouldest be well enough, if thou couldst but see and believe it is so well with thee as it is. *Crede quod habes & habes.* Meer fancy causeth neither good nor

evil really to exist, no more than colours do in the Rain-bow, or those things which meet us only in our dreams. Are not the riches of rich men a strong tower in their imagination? but are they therefore really so? yea, are they not like birds that take wing and flie away? Let a melancholly man read of all sorts of diseases incident to the body of man, and presently he conceits he hath them all: But is he therefore an Hospital, or a *Pandora's box* of all diseases, because he fancieth himself so to be? Was that mad man in the *Comedy* robd of any reall happiness when cured, who in his distraction fancied himself a Prince, and therefore when he came to himself cried out, *Rem me occidistis amici non servastis.* You have not cured me, but undone me.

Fancy can make no man truly poor, or hungry, or naked, or deformed; though it may make them really miserable, by a false supposition of any, or all of these. For a man to think himself not to have enough, onely because others have more, is such a kind of deception, as if a man of sufficient stature standing by a giant, should think himself to be a dwarfe. If we have enough, what matter is it who hath more? Why should our eye be evil, because Gods eye is good? If you think that others having more eclipseth you (and therefore thou art *afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased. Psal.* 49.16. then it should seem thou art not content with the world for use, but wouldst have it for splendor, and to glory in. Now that is forbidden, *Jer.*9.23. *Thus saith the Lord, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth*

ſtandeth me, &c. If the world were any matter of glory, if men could really ſhine with the beames of the world, (as a wife is ſaid *lucere radiis mariti*) it is the manifeſt pleaſure of God, that ſo far forth they ſhould out-ſhine us, to whom he hath given more of the world than to our ſelves. Either thou haſt better things than thoſe of this world to glory in, or thou haſt not: If thou haſt not, thou haſt the one thing neceſſary to look after, inſtead of vying with others about the glory of this world (which is but a meer *Scheme* or fantaſie, or piece of pure pageantrie.) And if thou haſt intereſt in better things, thou doſt out-ſhine many others in the ſight of God, and in real worth; and therefore haſt no cauſe to envie thoſe (whom all things conſidered) thou doſt out-ſhine; but to be very contented and thankful. If then thou wouldſt be happy, abſtract from fancie, undeceive thy ſelf, know when thou art well. It is eaſier to fill thy belly than thine eye. Nature may quickly be ſatisfied: but fancy is inſatiable.

Lord give me to make *Agurs* choice, and to be pleaſed with it when I have done, *viz.* not to have riches (which ſome have, and others thirſt after) but to be fed with food convenient.

DISCOURSE XI:

Of neer Relations and Friends, being greater comforts each to other, than they had wont to be.

ONe of the beſt waies that I know for the great loſs ſuſtained by the late Fire (and all

other temporal losses to be made up to us, is, by promoting a Brief (as it were) amongst relations and friends (if it may take) to contribute to the reparation each of other: which may seem a great paradox; that those who have been mutual and joynt-sufferers, should be recruited by a collection made amongst themselves. But so it is, the wives may greatly help to repair what their husbands have lost; husbands what their wives: children the losses of their parents; and parents the losses of their children; servants the losses of their masters, &c. My meaning is, let each of these, give themselves to be more useful and comfortable each to other in the relation, in which they stand one to another, and the contribution they shall make in so doing, will be very considerable; even in proportion to so great a loss. The comfort or discomfort of a relation (such as it may be) may signifie more than the gaining or losing a great part of an estate, if not the whole. How many good parents would chearfully part with more than half of their estates, on condition they might be able to say of some one or more of their bad children, as that father of his returning prodigal? *Luke* 15. 24. *This my son was dead, and is alive; was lost, and is found.* The miserable consequences of this dolefullest of fears, never cost some parents half those sighs and tears, that the miscariages of some one childe hath done: nor would it refresh them so much to see *London* once again in its former glory, as to see their children brought into an estate of grace. When parents have been for several years together (as it were) in the pangs of a travelling woman, which

which is the Apoſtles metaphor. (ὃς ὠδίνω) What would they not give to be delivered, and to ſee the travel of their ſouls? Let children that were formerly otherwiſe, but become humble, ſerious, contented, diligent, dutiful, and above all, truly religious, evidencing the power of godlineſs to be in them; their parents that are ſuch, will eaſily acknowledge that God hath given them more in their children, than he took from them out of their eſtates, though they loſt many thouſands by the fire. If ever children that have almoſt broke their parents hearts, may ſo time their Reformation and Repentance, as to do their parents as much good as they have done them hurt, now is the time; if they ſhall labour to comfort them after ſo great a loſs, by giving them occaſion to celebrate their birth-day, (I mean the day of their new birth) whilſt they are yet in mourning for the deſtruction of *London*. Surely the ſoul of a childe to a religious parent is more than the glory of a City.

Can yoke-fellows do nothing towards repairing the loſſes each of other? What if husbands and wives ſhould more ſtudy and practice the duties of their reſpective relations? what if they ſhould pleaſe each other more for their good, to edification? what if there ſhould be a mutuall contention between them, which ſhould love and oblige the other moſt, and no contention but that? what if they ſhould bear more with each others infirmities, and ſeek the comfort of each others lives, as of their own? what if they ſhould ſtrive which of them ſhould bear the loſs moſt patiently, and moſt Chriſtian-like, and

ſhould moſt comply with the law of their new and mean condition? what if bad husbands ſhould henceforth become good, and good husbands better, and wives the like; would it no waies compenſate the loſs which hath been ſuſtained? Surely it would very much; yea, thoſe that know how great a croſs ſome maſters have had, and have in their ſervants, what with ſtubbornneſs, negligence, unfaithfulneſs, & other ill qualities; eſpecially thoſe that have matters of great truſt to employ them in, cannot but think it would greatly comfort them after their loſſes, if thoſe ſervants of theirs, *Oneſimus*-like, ſhould of unprofitable become profitable, and of rebels converts. If every family were furniſhed with loving yoke-fellows, carrying (as it were) one ſoul in two bodies, dutiful and gracious children, diligent and faithful ſervants, ſhould they weare, and fare, much more meanly than they did heretofore, yet would their lives be much more happie than they had wont to be. If there be any Relations ſo bad they cannot mend (as I hope there is not) or any ſo good they need not mend (which I very much doubt) this counſel doth not concern them: but if neither, then is it a good expedient for every family in ſome meaſure to repaire their loſſes by; and how do I wiſh it may be put in practice?

Lord thou haſt told us that *a brother is born for adverſity. Prov.* 17.17. ſo is a husband, a wife, a parent, a childe. Grant Lord, that we may all walk in the ſeveral relations in which we ſtand, ſo like perſons born or cut out for ſuch a time of adverſitie as this, that we may help to make up

that

that breach each for other, which thy righteous hand hath made upon us all.

DISCOURSE XII.

Of training up children in Religion, that they may come to have God for their portion.

HAve we not heard ſome parents ſince this Fire, bitterly crying out, Alas! what ſhall they do for their poor children? They are grown up, and ready for portions to diſpoſe in the world; and their portions, the fruit of many years care and ſore travel, were not long ſince as ready for them: but in came the Fire like a giant refreſhed with wine, mighty to run his race, and ſwept them all away. And now where ſhall they have ſtocks for their ſons that were about to ſet up for themſelves? where ſhall they have portions for their daughters to beſtow them in marriage? wherewithall ſhall they breed their younger children like themſelves, as they have done the reſt? To them that ask theſe queſtions, give me leave to anſwer thus: If your children want nothing elſe but hanſome breeding, as to curious works, Muſick, Dancing, and ſuch like; if your ſons want nothing but great ſtocks to ſet up their Trades; and your daughters nothing but ſo many hundreds to prefer them to rich husbands, you are happy parents. For if that be all they want, they muſt needs be poſſeſſed of the one thing neceſſary, of that better part which *Mary* choſe for her

ſelf, that can never be taken away from them. If ſo, though your affliction be great, yet the mercy ſhewed you in reference to them, is ſo much greater, that it is a ſhame for you to make any great complaint. But if you ſay that your children are ſome of them ſtark naught, manifeſtly in the gall of bitterneſs, and band of iniquity; others of them towardly, yet but ſlenderly hopeful for matter of grace: I am ſure by your own confeſſion there is ſomething incomparablie more needful than ſtocks and portions to be ſought out for them, as to which you may take as effectual a care, and make as ſufficient a proviſion (all your loſſes notwithſtanding) as if no ſuch thing had ever befallen you. And what is it, but that your children may become wiſe unto ſalvation, that they may *know the God of their fathers, and may ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind*, as *David* exhorteth *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. That the diſobedient may be reduced to the wiſdom of the juſt, that they may be born again, and may be found in *Chriſt*, having the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith: In a word, that they may attain that holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. For this care God commends *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, &c.* As for giving your younger children high and genteele breeding: may not that be ſpared? if God hath taken away the eſtates you had provided for them, what would ſuch breeding do, but raiſe their ſpirits above what their condition is like to be, as the caſe now ſtands? and

and may not a plainer education better fit them for that courſe of life, to which the providence of God is like to call them? As for your elder children, either they are thoſe bad ones you ſpeak of, thoſe Children of *Belial*, and why ſhould you covet great eſtates for them? would they not conſume them upon their luſts? would not the proſperity of ſuch fooles ſlay them? (as it hath done many others) and would not all thoſe great things be converted by them either into the luſts of the fleſh, or the luſt of the eye, or the pride of life? As for thoſe of your children that are now towardly, but not religious; either they will come to have grace in time, or not: If not, there will be a ſmaller accompt to give for a ſmall eſtate, than for a great one, and it may be leſs of a ſnare in it; but on the other hand, if God ſhall firſt or laſt beſtow his ſaving grace, either on your children that are meerly civil, or on them that are prophane, or on both, trouble not your heads any further about them, godlineſs hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come: God will withhold no good thing from them that do, or ſhall walk uprightly before him, *Pſal.* 84.

Now from theſe premiſes, how naturally may we infer, that the great care that is incumbent upon Parents, is, that their children may come to be truly gracious. Grace without eſtates will certainly make them, (though an eſtate with grace, like an inheritance with wiſdome, would add ſomething to them for the preſent) but an eſtate without grace would probably undo them; or if not be their very undoing, yet would aggravate their condemnationvery much.

It

It may be your childrens advantage, that you are ſenſible, that if God be not their portion, they will have none at all, (or very little) becauſe otherwiſe it may be you had intruſted them with the World, and never lookt after an intereſt in God for them. That your children may be ſeaſoned with Grace, if you educate them by a *proxy*, let me adviſe you to make choice of thoſe that will truly concern themſelves for the good of their ſouls, and as much to breed them chriſtians as ſcholars; and make it your earneſt requeſt to them ſo to do. Having committed them to the tuition of thoſe that are pious and prudent, by no meanes conjure them (as ſome fond Parents have done) alwayes to ſpare the Rod, leſt they ſpoile the Childe. Whereſoever you ſend them, let your earneſt prayers daily follow them: and for this above all things, that God would write his Law in their hearts, and put his fear into them, that they may never depart from him. If you train them up at home, bring them betimes acquainted with the holy Scriptures (which *Timothy* is ſaid to have been inſtructed in from a Childe) alſo with the Grounds and Principles of Religion, that they may underſtand both Scripture and Sermons: be droping wholſome counſel into them ever and anon; be poſſeſſing them with the danger of ſin, the excellency of holineſs, the neceſſity of being new creatures, the doctrines of heaven and hell, and ſuch like great truths; fill their memories with ſuch paſſages of Scripture as do moſt concern them, which may both direct their practiſe, and keep out bad thoughts; Diſcountenance all the manifeſt ſin you ſee by them, as lying, filthy

ſpeak-

ſpeaking, pride, envy, paſſion, ſtubbornneſs, and ſuch like: and encourage all the good you ſee by them, and reward them for it, ſpeak to them warmly and affectionately of the matters of religion, that they may ſee you are in good earneſt. Keep no ſervants that may debauch them, but ſuch as are honeſtly inclined, and will help them in Religion, rather than hinder them. See they get no haunt of ill company: Conceale your own infirmities from them all you can, (*Debetur pueris Reverentia*) that they may not copy them out. Let what concerns the ſouls of your children receive a ſanction from both Parents: and to make it more forcible, let one Parent if preſent, alwayes ſecond the other, as to thoſe matters. Let them every day, that you are with them, hear more or leſs from you concerning God. Whet the Vitals of Religion upon them, rather than inable them to tell you who was ſuch a ones Father, or how long ſuch a Patriarch lived. Remember them daily and fervently both in your Families and Cloſets. Bewail their ſins next your own, and beg pardon for them. Not only pray for them your ſelves, but beſpeak the prayers of others, together with your own for them, and take that for one of the greateſt kindneſſes that can be done for you. Principle them againſt the moſt dangerous errours of the times and places they live in: (as Popery where that ſpreads, &c.) Intice them to be much in reading good books, and for that end furniſh them with thoſe that are pleaſant, as well as profitable. Acquaint them with ſignal paſſages of divine providence, thereby to breed in them awfull apprehenſions of God, as the *Jewes* were com-

commanded to tell their children the reaſon of the Paſſeover, *Exod.* 12. 26. Verſe them in the Hiſtory of Martyrs, which may ſhew them the faith and patience of the Saints, and acquaint them with the doctrine of the croſs. Keep them alwayes in action, to prevent the miſchiefes that come by idleneſs. Get Maſters for them as ſoon as they are fit to go out, and before they grow too ſturdy to bear the Yoak, or make them ſo ſubject and ſerviceable, in their nonage, in your own houſes, that they may diſcern no great difference betwixt home and an Apprentiſhip, or betwixt a Fathers and a Maſters houſe. Breed them rather beneathe, than above what you can do for them: uſe them to be contented with any thing that is fitting, for matter of cloaths & diet. Let morning and evening be (as it were) your medicinal times, in which to give them ſomething for their ſouls health, next their heart in a morning, next their reſt at night. Be ever and anon phyſicking them for wormes, that is, take heed of ſuffering them to be humourſome, troubleſome, and hard to pleaſe. Make them pay reſpect to your perſons, that they may reverence your counſel. Give them thoſe repreſentations of God, as may cauſe them as well to thirſt after him, to love and delight in him, as to fear and ſtand in awe of him: and thoſe characters of Religion, as may cauſe them to look upon all its ways as pleaſantneſs, & all its paths as peace, as an eaſie Yoak and a light burthen. Teach them to be humble, and then God will teach them, *Pſal.* 25. 9. Sin as little as may be for their ſakes, as well as your own, leſt God ſhould *lay up your iniquity for your children, as it is*, *Job* 21. 19. And whereas

whereas in many things we do all offend, begge we earneſtly of God that our Children may fare the better for our prayers, and not the worſe for our ſins.

And now Lord that I have been writing what Parents ſhould do for their Children's ſouls, I dare not ſay with that young man in the Goſpel, all theſe things have I done; but only that all theſe things I deſire to do, for, and in reference to my Children, by the aſſiſtance of thy grace. As *Peter* ſaid to *Chriſt*, Lord thou knoweſt I love thee, ſo can I appeale and ſay? Lord thou knoweſt I love my Children's ſouls, and am more tranſported with deſires it might be well with them, than that they might proſper upon all other accounts. The only riches that I inſiſt upon for them, (and Lord turn not away that prayer of thy ſervant, which comes ſwiming to thee in melting teares, and may it alſo in the blood of thy Son) I ſay Lord, the only riches *I* inſiſt upon for my children (whatever others do for theirs) is, that they may be *rich in faith, and heires of the Kingdome, which thou haſt promiſed to them that love thee, James* 2. 5.

DISCOURSE XIII.

Of that comfort under trouble, which may be drawn from the conſideration of Gods nature.

I Honour the wiſdome of *David*, who when God gave him his election of one evil out of three, (which he would) made choice of that which might ſeem to come more immediately from

from God, (viz. the Plague) saying, *Let us fall*
2 Sam. 24. 14. *now into the hand of the Lord, and let me not fall into the hand of Man,* and the reason he gives, is, *because his* (that is Gods) *mercies are great* (or many.) It is a great relief in and under troubles to look upon our selves as in Gods hands, and upon the nature of that God (in whose hands we are) as far better than is the nature of any, even the best natured of men. They misconstrue *David*, that think he intimates, as if men were not always in the hands of God, in every kind of affliction that befalls them (be it sword, or famine, by siege) for all he meaneth is, that as to some troubles, we do not fall into the hand of men, but of God: as namely under the plague, which is an Arrow shot from God's bow, not from Man's. Men are called *God's hand*, *Psal.* 17. 14. *From Men which are thy hand*, so that when under the rage of men, we are in the hand of God; but we may be in the hand of God and not of men. (By the way, what furious creatures are wicked men, that *David* should be more afraid of Gods punishing him by their hand, than by plague, or famine.)

That under all our troubles we are in Gods hand, is clear. Be also convinced, that that is to be in a good hand, that you are in a good hand, when in the hand of God, and that will comfort you exceedingly. If the nature and disposition of God be very good, transcendently good, that is, kind, and gracious, and mercifull, as the scripture tells us in sundry places, it is, *Exod.* 34. 6. *Nehem.* 9. 17, 31. *Jer.* 3. 12. *Joel.* 2. 13. (With an hundred more in the old Testament, besides the new) then must we needs be in a good hand when

when we are in Gods hand. Is a Childe ſafe in the hand of his tender mother, even when ſhe hath a Rod in her other hand? and are not Gods Children well in the hand of their heavenly Father, who hath ſaid to his Church, *though a Mother may forget her Childe, yet will not I forget thee, Iſa.* 49. 15. *I have graven thee upon the palmes of my hands, &c.* Methinks that heathen *Poet* ſpake divinely, who ſpeaking of the love of God to man, (underſtand him but of good men, if of a love of complacency; but of others alſo, if of a love of benevolence) *Charior eſt illis homo quam ſibi.* Man is more dear to them, meaning to the Gods, (which plural number is the only thing in that ſaying, that diſcovers the Author to have been a heathen, and not an eminent Chriſtian) than he is to himſelf: or God hath more love for men, than they have for themſelves. That text, *Heb.* 10. 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*; if rightly underſtood, no wayes contradicteth what I have ſaid: for it is meant of ſo falling into the hands of God, as they muſt do, who *have trodden under foot the Son of God, counted his blood an unholy thing, and done deſpight to the ſpirit of Grace, verſ.* 29. for that is to fall, not under the meer correcting, but the revenging and conſuming hand of God, as he hath ſaid, *vengeance is his, verſ.* 30. he will pour out fiery indignation upon the adverſaries, *v.* 27. meaning ſuch Apoſtates as after illumination turn enemies to Chriſt and his truth. But what is that to others? It is ill for the rejecters and oppoſers of Chriſt, to fall into the hand of God. God out of *Chriſt*, eſpecially to them that ſet themſelves againſt *Chriſt*, is ~~wrath. But it is~~ terrible

terrible. But it is well for the accepters and receivers of *Christ*, to fall into Gods hand, for God in and thorough *Christ* is unspeakably gracious.

He is partly an Infidel that would have more assurance of the sweet nature and disposition of God, than Scripture and experience; but if the weakness of such men may be condiscended to, I can presently call in sound reason for a witness. Who shed abroad all that love and kindness, and compassion, and tenderness in the hearts of men and women, fathers and mothers, that is there found? who taught men to know that love, and pitty, and mercy, are real excellencies and perfections: but hatred and cruelty are odious and detestable things, the fruits of sin and weakness? that what we call good nature doth as much excell that we call ill nature, as light doth excell darkness? who hath given us to understand, that to do good, and to show mercy, are sacrifices acceptable to God; but fury and violence his soul hateth. Hath not God himself taught us these things, and is it not therefore, that the *Gentiles* are said to *do by nature the things of the Law*? and that, *they that have not the Law, are a Law to themselves, and do show the work of the Law written in their hearts*, *Rom.* 1. Is it not because love and mercy are agreeable to Gods nature (the Scripture saith, *God is love*) that he hath commended them to us, and made us to see a beauty in them, and to apprehend that God is therewithall delighted, and that with the merciful, he will shew himself merciful? Is it not therefore, that God hath called his mercy his glory, and told us that *mercy rejoyceth against judgment*

judgment, *James* 2. 13. Much of our diſquietment under affliction proceedeth from miſconceivings of God's nature, and of his heart towards us, and for that we think we ſee a ſword in the hand of an enemy, when it is only a Rod in the hand of a father. Therefore it is excellent advice, that we ſhould acquaint our ſelves with God in order to being at peace, *Job* 22.21.

O Lord I know it is neceſſary I ſhould be ſometimes chaſtned, and better by thy hand than by any other. Thou knoweſt how to do it in mercy and in meaſure: Parents may correct their children for their pleaſure; but thou chaſtneſt thine for their profit, I ſhall count my loſſes a fruit of thy love, if thou wilt but tell me that I am therefore chaſtned of the Lord, that I may not be condemned with the World.

DISCOURSE. XIV.

Of drawing the Waters of Comfort under affliction, out of the Wells of Gods Promiſes.

AS full of love and goodneſs as the nature of God is, yet guilty Man is loath to lie at pure mercy, and to ſtand to Gods meer courteſie, therefore in *Heb.* 6. 18. we read of a further proviſion which God hath made for the comfort of his people, *viz.* by his promiſe and oath, both vouchſafed to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 22. 16. (and to other believers in and with him) *that by thoſe two immutable things, the heires of promiſe might have ſtrong conſolation.* The end of divine promiſes is, that God who was and had been other-

wiſe free to do or not to do ſuch good things for us, might (as it were) enter into bond, (which he could no otherwiſe do) and might give us the ſecurity of his truth and faithfulneſs, as well as that other of his mercy and goodneſs. God knowing that we could no waies bind him, that is, oblige him in point of juſtice, or as indiſpenſible objects of his mercy (which in our ſelves we were not) to ſhow kindneſs to us, hath bound himſelf by his own voluntary promiſes, and engaged his truth (which cannot faile) on behalf of his power and wiſdome, and other attributes, that they ſhall be ſo and ſo imploied for us, which otherwiſe we could at moſt but have hoped, but may be now aſſured of, as we are, that it is impoſſible for God to lie. Now, as there are promiſes for divers other purpoſes; ſo not a few to ſupport and comfort us under various ſufferings and afflictions.

I may recite but the heads of promiſes, relateing to adverſity, and it may be not all of them neither. There are promiſes of God's ſupporting his people under affliction, ſanctifying it to them: vouchſafing them his gracious preſence in it; and delivering them out of it in due time. And what more can we deſire, than to be ſeaſonably delivered out of trouble, and mean time to be upheld in it, bettered by it, and to have God with us, as he was with the three Children in the fiery Furnace. I ſhall quote but a few promiſes of this nature, and the rather becauſe they deſerve to want comfort, who wil not ſearch the Scripture for it, that thorough patience and comfort of the Scripture they might have hope. If men had no Bibles, nor could come by none,

I would not do them that wrong, as to faile of quoting any one such promise, that I could call to mind: but now one instance of each sort may serve the turn. As for the promise of support under affliction; it is as plain as words can make it, in 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithfull, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape: that you may be able to bear it.* Then, as for the presence of God with his people in their afflictions, read *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest thorough the waters, I will be with thee, &c.* And *Heb.* 13. 5. *He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* That their afflictions shall be sanctified, is secured to Gods people by those words, *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* And *lastly*, as for deliverance out of trouble, (which some do, but ought not most of all to thirst after) there are many texts, that give us to expect it, as namely, *Psal.* 103. 9. *The Lord will not alwayes chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. Lam.* 3. 31, 32. *The Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. Isa.* 57. 16. *I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwayes wrath, for the spirit should faile before me, and the souls which I have made.* God, who is conscious to himself that he cannot lie, may well expect that these, and many more promises of like nature, which he hath made, should contribute much to our support and comfort, sith each of them would do so, if stedfastly believed.

O Lord here are many deep Wells of living water, let me not want the bucket of faith to

draw out of them. Could I but as ſtedfaſtly believe them, as thou wilt certainly perform them, to them that do, would not my ſoul be refreſhed with ſuch promiſes well nigh as much, as it could well be with their reſpective performances. Performances may be ſomething ſweeter, but can be nothing ſurer than are divine promiſes.

DISCOURSE XV.

Of fetching comfort from the uſual proceedings of God, with his people, in and under affliction.

After all that hath been ſpoken, both from the nature and promiſes of God to comfort us, our weak faith (more ſhame for it) ſeems to implore ſome further relief from experience. Experience is a good crutch to a lame faith, which, were it otherwiſe, then lame might ſtand and walk without it. Since the *Apoſtle* tells us, that *experience worketh hope*, we will not reject its aſſiſtance. Let experience then tell us how God is wont to carry himſelf towards his people, in and under their afflictions.

Firſt, hear what the Scripture ſaith to that, *Iſaiah* 63. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them, in his love, and in his pitty he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the dayes of old.* See alſo *Pſal.* 112. 4. *To the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs*: Add thoſe words of God by his Propher concerning his Church, *Hoſeah* 2. 14. *I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderneſs, and ſpeak*

com-

comfortably to her. verſ. 15. *And I will give her Vineyards from thence, (viz.* from the Wilderneſs) *and the Valley of Acor* (which ſignifies trouble) *for a door of hope, and ſhe ſhall ſing there as in the dayes of her youth, and as in the day when ſhe came up from Egypt.* And 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *Bleſſed be God who comforteth us in all our tribulation: For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt.* 2 *Cor.* 8. 2. *Speaking of the Churches of Macedonia,* he ſaith, that in a great trial of affliction, *the abundance of their joy abounded, to the riches of their liberality,* and 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye, for the ſpirit of glory reſteth on you.* What do all theſe paſſages ſeem to imply, but that *God* is wont to reſerve the ſtrongeſt cordials, (I mean comforts) for his people, to the time of their deepeſt ſufferings? *Job* 22. 29. *When Men are caſt down, then thou ſhalt ſay there is lifting up, and he ſhall ſave the humble perſon.* As our greateſt elevations do uſually precede our greateſt temptations and deſertions, (as *Paul* his rapture into the third heaven, was not long before his being buffeted: and *Chriſt* himſelf had received his baptiſme, and been honoured by a voice from Heaven, not long before he was led into the Wilderneſs to be tempted) ſo our greateſt temptations and dejections are uſually ſucceeded by our greateſt elevations and comforts. So it was with *Chriſt* after he had been tempted; *Angels came and miniſtred to him.* When *Chriſt* was either in his agony, or neer unto it, we read in *Luke* 22. 49. *That there appeared an Angel to him, ſtrengthning him.* If then it be true in a ſpiritual, as well as in a natural ſenſe, that it is

uſually moſt dark, but a little before break of day, and that the bright face of heaven is better diſcerned under ground than above, (where the reflection of beames dazleth our eyes) and if it be ſo, that when the Bricks are doubled, than God uſeth to ſend *Moſes* (that is deliverance) if God never ſpeak more kindly to his people then he uſeth to do, when he hath drawn them into a Wilderneſs; if God ſmile upon his people then, eſpecially when the World frowns upon them; and when their outward ſufferings abound, cauſe their inward conſolations to do ſo likewiſe, and make light ariſe to them in darkneſs: why ſhould I not then ſay, as *David* did, *Pſal.* 49. 5. *Wherefore ſhould I fear in the dayes of evil, when the iniquity of my heels ſhall compaſs me about?* (ſuppoſing him to mean the puniſhment or fruit of his iniquities) If *when I ſit in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light to me*; if when I have more trouble in the World, I may have more peace in *Chriſt*; if I be in a Priſon, and God will there give me Songs in the night, as he did to *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts* 16. if I were at a ſtake, and might there feel greater joyes in my ſoul, than ever I was acquainted with before, (as ſome holy *Martyrs* did) who could ſay I were miſerable, and not do me wrong? or how could I poſſibly think my ſelf ſo to be?

Mich. 7. 8.

Pſal. 23 4. Lord, *though I walk thorough the valley of the ſhadow of death, yet will I fear no evil*, if thou wilt be with me, and wilt cauſe thy Rod and thy Staff to comfort me. Though *deep call upon deep at the noiſe of thy Water-ſpouts*, and though *all thy waves and thy billowes are gone over me*. Yet if thou Lord wilt command thy loving kindneſs in the day

day time, and cauſe thy Songs to be with me in the night, I will not fear, though an Hoſt of evils ſhould encamp againſt me. *Pſal.* 142. 8.

DISCOURSE XVI.

Of that relief and ſupport which the commonneſs of the Caſe of affliction may afford us.

IT is a ſign that *Men walk in a vain ſhew* (as the Scripture ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 39. 6.) for that they are apt to be diſquieted at thoſe things which ſhould comfort them, (ſo was *Peter* at the approach of *Chriſt*, crying out, depart from me O Lord) and on the other hand, to be comforted with thoſe things which one would think would rather diſquiet them, as namely with others being under the ſame, or other as great calamities as themſelves. *Solamen miſeris ſocios habuiſſe doloris.* Though we may not ſay, the more (in ſufferings together) the merrier, yet according to the courſe of men ſo it is, that the more fellow-ſufferers, the leſs ſad are they that ſuffer. Neither may we impute this wholly to the weakneſs and enviouſneſs of men, ſith the *Apoſtle* from that very conſideration, doth labour to comfort Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *No temptation hath take you but what is common to men*: and in 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. *The ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren, that are in the World.* Therefore doubtleſs there is ſome reaſon why men ſhould not be ſo much dejected, when they conſider themſelves not to be alone in miſery, (though upon other accompts again we ſhould be never

leſs ſad and ſolitary, than when none are in trouble but our ſelves) then if they were as *David* ſpeaks of himſelf, *Pſal.* 102. 7. *Like a Sparrow alone upon the Houſe top, or like a Pellican in the wilderneſs, or like an Owle in the Deſart.* For in that caſe we might be apt to think that God had ſome particular controverſie with us more than with all other men, that he had ſingled us out to make examples of us, that he had ſet us like beacons upon a hill to warn and alarm others, or that our ſufferings were ſuch as could not be borne, becauſe we have no inſtances of thoſe that do or ever did bear the like.

Now the commonneſs of ſufferings, and thoſe of the ſame kind to others with our ſelves, doth much take off from all thoſe ſuſpicions and prejudices, eſpecially if they be ſuch as we doubt not, but have intereſt in the love and favour of God, for thence may we conclude that hatred is not to be known by ſuch diſpenſations as thoſe. Afflictions in one kind or other are common to men, yea to good men, or the generality of them at all times; but ſome have them in one way, ſome in another, ſome in body, ſome in minde, ſome in eſtate, ſome in relations, ſome in all; but all in ſome. For Man is born to ſorrow, as the ſparks flie upward, and whomſoever God loves, he rebukes and chaſtneth, yea every ſon whom he receiveth: but there are times in which the afflictions of many are inviſible, only their own hearts know their own ſorrow, and wherein they are ſo various, that as we ſay, *ſo many Men ſo many mindes*, ſo may it almoſt be ſaid, ſo many men, ſo many ſeveral ſorts of miſeries, and uſually every one thinks his own

the

the greateſt, and is ready to ſay, Is there any ſorrow like to mine.

But it is otherwiſe at this day, God having caſt multitudes both of perſons and families at one and the ſame time into one and the ſame furnace, that none might ſay, others were corrected but with rods, but we with ſcorpions. Now this being ſo, there are the more to pitty you, the fewer to inſult over you: though when all this is ſaid, I honour them that ſay from their hearts, They wiſh they had ſuffered more than they did (if more could have been) if it had been the will of God that none might have been ſufferers but they. But ſeeing ſuch was the good will and pleaſure of God, that thouſands ſhould be involved in the ſame calamity with our ſelves, and many of them our betters: who is not aſhamed, yea who is not afraid to contend with God for what hath befallen himſelf? who ſeeth not reaſon to ſtand before God like a ſheep dumb before the ſhearer? Who would not lay his mouth in the duſt if there may yet be hope? What art thou, and what was thy fathers houſe, that the deſtroying Angel ſhall paſſe over thee, and thy doors be as it were ſprinkled, when he entred into the houſes of ſo many, not only *Egyptians* but *Iſraelites?* If our betters have been equal ſharers in this calamity (as who is ſo proud as not to think ſo) how can we but think of thoſe words, *Jer.* 49. 12. *Behold they whoſe judgment was not to drink of the cup, have drunken, and art thou he that ſhalt altogether go unpuniſhed?* To have eſcaped had been a miracle of mercy: but to have been involved with ſo many that deſerved it leſs, was no wonder at all.

Lord,

Lord, as for all thoſe whoſe houſes and ſubſtance this Fire hath conſumed, give them much more to admire that their perſons did eſcape the common calamity of the Plague, than that their poſſeſſions were taken away by the common calamity of the Fire: and as for thoſe who have eſcaped both Plague and Fire (they and their dwellings) let them be raviſhed with the remembrance of thy diſtinguiſhing goodneſs, and ſo anſwer the law of thy kindneſs, that thou maiſt not reſerve them to a greater judgment than either that of the Plague, or that other of the late diſmall Fire.

DISCOURSE XVII.

Of the lightneſs of all temporal afflictions.

IT is well I have Scripture to back me, elſe I foreſee I might poſſibly have been eſteemed both hard-hearted and heretical, for ſaying that all temporal afflictions are but light: Whereas ſome would oppoſe their experience to ſuch an aſſertion, I may comply with that, and yet do the Scripture right. All your experience can contend for, is only this, that ſome temporal afflictions (and this in particular) abſolutely and in themſelves conſidered, are not light, but heavie (as *Job* ſpeaks) *like the ſands of the ſea.* That I can afford to grant; but yet thoſe very afflictions relatively conſidered, and compared with miſeries of another nature: namely, with internal and eternal torments, give me leave to ſay are but as ſo many flea-bitings. Say who dare

dane that utmoſt poverty is comparable either to the pains of hell, or pangs of conſcience. Who is ſo deſperate as to be willing to exchange meer beggery or famine its ſelf, with either of thoſe? Doth not *Solomon* ſay, and is it not moſt true, That the *ſpirit* (meaning the conſcience) *of a man* (if that be found and in peace) *can bear his infirmities, but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* That is, none can bear. If *Job* ſitting upon the dunghill, can then and there ſay, he knows that his redeemer liveth, and he ſhall one day ſee him with theſe eyes; he that thinks him half ſo miſerable whilſt he can ſo ſay, as one that ſits upon a throne, and mean time ſeeth the hand-writing of God upon the wall, (as *Belteſhazzar* did) telling him that he is weighed and found too light; or cries out with *Spira* and others in the like caſe, that he is damned, he is damned; or but as *David* ſometimes did, that God hath forgotten to be gracious to him, and ſhut up his loving kindneſs towards him in diſpleaſure; I ſay, he that thinks the latter of theſe, though upon a Throne, the leſs miſerable of the two, knows not what he ſaith, nor whereof he affirms. Should he be tranſlated from a dunghill to a throne, with ſuch different circumſtances as theſe, oh how would he long to be upon his dunghill again, with ſuch language in his mouth and heart, as was that of *Job*, I know my redeemer lives?

If thy affliction be but temporal and external, fear to ſay, no ſorrow like to thine, no not that of a wounded conſcience; leſt God hear it and be angry, and ſhould either exchange thy other miſery for a wounded conſcience, or add

that

that to all the reſt, that by woful experience thou maiſt learn, neither to overvalue the one, nor to undervalue the other. And do the pangs of a wounded conſcience far exceed the miſeries of an impoveriſhed condition, what then do the pains of hell, which far exceed the pangs of conſcience? The worm that never dies (by which is meant a gnawing conſcience) is but one part of the torments of hell. Beſides that, there is the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone; the ſmoak whereof aſcendeth continually. What is it to have fire conſume our dwellings, in compariſon of dwelling our ſelves with conſuming fire, and with everſtaſting burnings? who believes hell to be what it is, and doth not think one year or moneth in the torments of that place, to be more unſufferable than all the vexations of a long and afflicted life; were it not leſs miſery to be as *Lazarus*, that beggar, full of ſores, and craving of the crumbs that fell from the rich mans table, and glad of dogs to lick his ſores, yea to be ſo for many years together, than for the ſpace of one year to be as *Dives* in hell, earneſtly begging for a little water to cool his tongue, tormented in flames, and could by no means obtain it? Add the circumſtance of eternity to the greatneſs of hell torments, and ſee if all the troubles of this life do not even vaniſh before it, and appear as nothing. If then thou art convinced (as I hope thou art) there is a hell, and haſt reaſon to believe that multitudes are there (for all are there that have lived and died in their ſins) let me ſuppoſe thee the greateſt ſufferer this fire hath made (if there be any one greater than any of the

the reſt) and when that is done, compare thy condition with that of the damned in hell, and then ſay, if thy affliction when laid in the ballance, be not found altogether lighter than vanity. If God will aſſure thee that thou ſhalt flie from the wrath to come, all that hath yet befaln thee may be born.

It is not for want of pitty and commiſeration towards you, that I write this (I hope my bowels yearn towards you) but I would juſtifie the Scripture, when it ſaith, that temporal afflictions are but light. 2 *Cor.* 4.17. *Our light affliction* (ſaith *Paul*) *which is but for a moment*, &c. Read but St. *Pauls* perils, 2 *Cor.* 11. 26,27. and his ſufferings, *v.* 23. *In ſtripes above meaſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft, thrice ſtoned, &c.* and then tell me, if his temporal afflictions were light, whoſe can be called heavie? Add to what I have ſaid, that the pangs of conſcience, and the pains of hell (which I have made appear, do ſo infinitely outweigh all the troubles of this life) are no other than what our ſins have deſerved, and therefore our outward afflictions may be ſaid to be light, not only if compar'd with what is come upon others, but alſo with what might juſtly have been inflicted upon our ſelves. So that we may here take up thoſe words of *Ezra, chap.* 9.13. *Thou Lord haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.* If one that deſerves to be put to a painful and ſhameleſs death, comes off with a burn in the hand, who ſaith not his puniſhment is light, compared with his offence? I am deceived if by this time I have not plainly proved all temporal afflictions to be but light, though ſome are nothing like ſo light as others. Now

Now Lord, what I have proved by Scriptural arguments, let not me or others ever seem to disprove by anti-scriptural practices, whilst we affirm Temporal afflictions to be but light, let us not groan under them as if they were unsupportable, or to be overwhelmed by them. Oh mix not Spiritual afflictions with temporal. If thou wilt rebuke me, seem not to do it in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy sore displeasure. Let me read thy love in and with my temporal afflictions, and I shall ever acknowledge that in comparison, not only of eternal torments, but even of inward and spiritual troubles, they are but light.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Of the shortness of Temporal Afflictions.

THough afflictions be not sweet in themselves, yet it is one comfort, they are but short: And how can the troubles of this life be otherwise than short, when this life it self is not long? *Paul* exhorting Christians to weep as if they wept not, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. promiseth this, *Brethren the time is short*, *v.* 28. and to shew the exceeding shortness of it, he calls it a moment, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. *Our affliction which is but for a moment.* Persons under affliction are apt to think the time long: as those that are in great pain, be it but for a day, or a piece of a day. In the morning they cry, *Would to God it were evening*, *Deut.* 28. 67. *and in the evening, would to God it were morning.* They are ready to expostulate with the

the Sun, ſaying, why ſtay the wheels of his chariot ſo long, though he be as a mighty giant that runs a race. They would make morning and evening meet (if they knew how) and have it night ſo ſoon as it is day, and day again ſo ſoon as it is night. But is time long becauſe men think it ſo? is a Summer-day ſhort, becauſe they that ſpend it in pleaſure think it is night quickly, and wiſh it were twice ſo long? ſhall we ſay the time is long, when God ſaith it is ſhort? Let God be true, and ever man a liar. We our ſelves ſhall ſay the ſame thing, if we compare time with eternity, as the *Apoſtle* did when he ſaid, *Our affliction which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory.* A thouſand years with God (becauſe eternal) are but as one day, or as a watch in the night: what then is fourſcore years which few exceed, yea few arrive to? There are eternal ſufferings, how long are they? and how ſhort are theſe if compared with them? If our miſeries may end with our lives, we ſhall have no cauſe to complain they have been long. God hath made our daies as a ſpan, and our years are as nothing before him. Why ſhould we think that we are long deprived of thoſe things that we could not have long enjoyed? Do not perſons that have the world at will bemoan themſelves to think how ſoon their ſouls will be required of them, and then whoſe all theſe things will be? Had the City been ſtanding, had trade been flouriſhing, had waters of a full cup been wrung out to you, and had God given you a leaſe of all that mercy during life, how ſoon would that life expire? how ſoon muſt you be gathe-

gathered to your fathers, and go the way of all flesh? how close doth eternity follow you at the heeles? how suddenly will it swallow you up? They that had but a little time to come in their leases, and no hopes of renewing them, count not their loss so great. Thou hast but a little time to come in thy life, which is without hope of being renewed, and therefore what great matter is it that thou hast lost? within a few years they that have great estates yet left, will enjoy no more of them than thou dost of thine, which the fire hath consumed. Is it an eternity of happiness that thou believest to be reserved for thee; wait but a little while, and thou wilt be in possession of it, and then thou wilt have no more need of those things.

O Lord, I shall not presume to ask, how many daies, or moneths, or years, my sufferings must last, or whether all the residue of my life: only be pleased to say, that they shall be but temporal; then shall I thankfully acknowledge that the sufferings of Time are mercifully short, if compared with the joyes of eternity.

DISCOURSE XIX.

Of the needfulness and usefulness of Affliction.

WE commonly say, that a rod now and then is as good for children as their meat, and God knows that it is so for his; should he spare his rod, and should his soul spare them for their crying, he should spoil his children.

1 *Pet.*

1 *Pet.* 1. 6. *For a ſeaſon* (*if need be*) *ye are in heavineſs.* If God do not correct us for his own pleaſure (as it is certain he doth not; for judgment is his ſtrange act, neither doth he willingly afflict the children of men) then ſurely it is for our profit. We read in *Pſa.* 55.19. *Becauſe men have no changes* (*viz.* from proſperity to adverſity, but the mountain of their happineſs ſtands ſtrong) *therefore they fear not God.* And another Text ſaith, *Put them in fear, that they may know themſelves to be but men.* (As if men, but for Gods terrifying them by affliction, would conceit themſelves to be more than men.) It is rendered as a reaſon why the *Moabites* were ſo wicked, becauſe they had no affliction (at leaſtwiſe of a long time.) *Jer.* 48.11. *Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, and he hath ſetled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from veſſel to veſſel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taſte remained in him, and his ſent is not changed:* *Agur* gives this reaſon why he prayed againſt riches, *Prov.* 30.9. *Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay who is the Lord?* *David* himſelf ſaith, *Pſal.* 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now have I kept thy word.* Believe theſe paſſages of Scripture, and judge afflictions needleſs if you can. Wind, (to which actions may be compared) may do ſome hurt; but if there were no winds the aire would putrifie, and there would be no living in it. Standing waters, as ſome moats and lakes, and ſuch like (to which perſons alwaies in proſperity may be compared) how unwholſome and unuſeful are they? As it is neceſſary that the Sea (and ſome other waters) ſhould ebbe as well as flow, and that the

Moon ſhould ſometimes decreaſe, or wane, as well as wax and increaſe at other times: ſo for us to have our ebbs as well as our tides, our wanes as well as our waxings.

It is a hard thought of God, that he ſhould make us drink bitter and loathſome potions, when we need them not. We cannot finde in our hearts to uſe our children ſo, nor yet to correct them (ſo much as gently) when we think there is no occaſion for it. Oh that we ſhould think more meanly of God than of our ſelves; or more highly of our ſelves than of the great and ever bleſſed God. Do we hear him crying out, *Hoſ.* 11.8. *How ſhall I deliver thee O Ephraim, how ſhall I make thee as Admah, and Zeboim, my heart is turned within me, &c.* And ſhall we think he will do ſuch things where there is no need? Take heed of charging God with hypocriſie, who is truth it ſelf. Far be it from us to ſay, Afflictions are not needful, becauſe our partial ſelves do not ſee how needful they are. When will our children confeſs that they want whipping? ſpare them till then, and you ſhall never correct them. Had *Paul* no need (yea he ſaith he had) of a meſſenger of Sathan to buffet him, leſt he ſhould be lifted up with the abundance of revelations? we have not his revelations, yet are we not as proud, as he either was, or was in danger to have been? Some humble ſervants of God have ſaid they never had that affliction in all their lives which they did not firſt or laſt finde they had need of. He that wants no correction is better than any of thoſe worthies we read of in Scripture; and he that thinks himſelf ſo, I am ſure hath need of it to

humble

humble him. Read the *third chapter*, and see how many lessons afflictions do teach us, and then judge if there be none of them you have yet to learn, at leastwise better and more perfectly than you have yet done. Can nothing profit us but that which pleaseth us? Physicians know that bitter drinks in many cases are more profitable (though loathsome) than those which are most pleasant.

O Lord, why am I so childishly averse to that which is so needful for me? If those to whom I commit the care of my body, do counsel me to bleed or purge, or to be cupt or scarified, and do advise me to it as necessary for my health, I submit to it, and why do I not submit to thee when thou ordereſt me unpleasant things, which yet are more needful for me? Are not frosts and nipping weather as necessary to kill the weeds, as warm Sunshine to ripen the corn? *Though no chastening be joyous for the present, but grievous, yet if it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness* (*Heb.* 12.11.) *I* desire not only to be patient under it, but also thankful for it.

DISCOURSE XX.

Of the mixture of mercies with judgments.

NO man hath truly either a heaven or a hell in this world. For as all our wine here is mixt with water, so all our water is mixt with wine: God in this life doth still in judgment remember mercy. *God hath set the one over against*

*the other. Prov.*7.14. meaning, mercy over againſt judgment. It is not for nothing that the *Apoſtle* exhorteth us, in every thing to be thankful, and ſaith, that is the will of God concerning us; But therefore it is, becauſe there is a mixture of mercies with all the afflictions of this life. Some may ſit in ſo much darkneſs, as to ſee no light at all. but ſome light there is in their condition, only they ſee it not. Our late Fire was as great a temporal judgment as moſt have been, yet he ſeeth nothing that diſcerns not a mixture of mercy with it. Was it not great mercy that when God burnt the City, yet he ſpared the Suburbs? that when mens houſes were conſumed, yet their perſons were delivered, yea and much of their goods and ſubſtance was ſnatched as a firebrand out of the fire? your flight was on the Sabbath-day: but it was not in the winter, in which the ſhortneſs of daies, and badneſs of the waies had ſcarce permited you to have conveied away the one half of what you did, not only by day, but by night. It was no ſmall mercy that the Plague was gone before the Fire came. For had it been otherwiſe, who that fled into the Countrey to ſave his life, durſt have come into the City to have ſaved his goods? Yea were not many fled ſo far from the face of that deſtroying Angel, that they could not have returned till it had been too late? Would the Countrey-men have brought their Carts and ventured their perſons if the plague had ſtill been raging? Where could you have beſtowed your goods, yea where could you have beſtowed your ſelves if the peſtilence had bin then amongſt you? who would have received them? yea who would

would have received you, if you had come from thence. The City could not dread the fire more than the Countrey would have done the peſtilence, and ſuch as had come from the place where it was. So far would they have been from putting your goods into their houſes, that they would not have received your perſons into their barns and ſtables; which in the height of the plague they refuſed to do. When the fire burnt your City, there was no more it could do; but had an invading enemy ſet the City on fire, would they not alſo have rifled your goods, raviſhed your wives, deflowred your daughters, and put your ſelves to the ſword? Was it no mercy that God by ſparing a remnant of the City, kept it from being like to *Sodom* and to *Gomorrah*? that there is ſomething left, out of which to make a little of every thing? Some places for aſſemblies yet to worſhip God in; ſome for Magiſtrates to diſpence juſtice in, ſome for Merchants and traders to meet and hold commerce in, ſome houſes for perſons yet to dwell in, who cannot conveniently dwell any where elſe, though now men crowd together as in the winter-time three or four might do into one bed, or the moſt in a family into ſome little warm parlour, which in the heat of weather had wont to keep in ſpacious rooms.

Archimedes had wont to ſay, Give him but a place to ſtand, in the mean time, & he would turn the world round. You want not a place to ſtand in, if that may enable you to turn and wind the world. If then our condition be not all miſery, why ſhould our poſture be all mourning? If

we receive good things at the hands of God, why ſhould we not alſo receive evil? Children can brook correction from their parents, becauſe they have all things elſe from them. Out of the mouth of the moſt high proceedeth not good, as well as evil? Is it God that taketh away, and is it not God that leaves alſo? *Job* 2. 10. and ſhould we not therefore bleſs the name of the Lord? Doth God create darkneſs, and doth he not form light alſo? *Iſa.* 45. 7. See how God makes the ſcales to play one againſt another; judgment in the one, mercy in the other, that it is hard to ſay which weighs heavieſt. Is it not of the Lords mercies that we are not utterly conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not? Are we ſtung with the fiery ſerpents of miſery, & may we not receive ſome cure by looking up to the brazen ſerpents of mercy? (if I may ſo call them.) How can we chuſe but call to mind thoſe words of God by his Prophet? *I will correct thee in meaſure, yet will I not make a full end of thee.* *Jer.* 30. 11.

O Lord, if thou hadſt mixed no mercy with our miſery, what could we do more than utterly deſpond and caſt away all our hopes and comfort? Thou haſt mixed thy diſpenſations, let us alſo mixe our affections: hope with our fear, rejoycing with our trembling, thankſgiving with our lamentations. *There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will ſprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not ceaſe, if the root thereof be yet in the earth, and the ſtock thereof in the ground.* *Job* 14. 7. *Through the ſent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant.* *v.* 9. *Thou haſt left us a remnant to eſcape, and gi-*

ven

ven us a naile in the place of the great City, that the Lord might lighten our eyes and give us a little reviving in our troubles. Thou haſt ſaid concerning *London*, as thou ſpakeſt to *Daniel* in viſion, *Dan.*4.14. *Hew down the tree, cut off its branches, ſhake off his leaves, and ſcatter his fruit, &c. nevertheleſs leave the ſtump of its root in the earth, and let it be wet with the dew of Heaven, &c. Lord* I deſire much more to wonder that any thing of *London* is left, than that the greateſt part of it is conſumed.

DISCOURSE XXI.

Of the Diſcommodities of Proſperity and Benefits of Affliction.

Proſperity hath its evils and inconveniences as wel as Adverſity; yea deadly inconveniencies, (as ſome uſe that *Epithite*) For ſaith *Salomon*, *Prov.* 1.32. *The proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.* And in *Eccleſ.* 5.13. he ſaith, he had *ſeen a ſore evil under the Sun*, viz. *Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.* Moſt men are in love with proſperity, and therefore cannot or will not ſee the diſcommodities of it, as our *Proverb* ſaith, *Love is blinde.* But how often doth it prove a kinde of luſcious poiſon, which not only ſwels and puffs up them that have it; but alſo frets & eats into them (like ſome deadly coroſive inwardly taken.) *James* ſpeaking to thoſe that had more wealth than they knew what to do with, ſaith, *The ruſt of their gold ſhould eat their fleſh as it*

were fire. Jam.5.5. Why went the young man from Christ so sorrowfully? *Luke* 18. 23. *Mat.* 19.22. was it not, *because he had great possessions*, as *Matthew* phraseth it; or as *Luke*, *for that he was very rich.* Thereupon saith Christ, *A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God*, and *it is easier for a camel to go thorough the eye of a needle*; and *Timothy* must charge those that are rich, not to be high minded, nor yet to trust in uncertain riches, implying they are apt to both. How hard is it for those that have an arm of flesh, not to make flesh their arm, and so to incur the curse? *Jer.*17.5. How hard it is to be so good a Steward of a great estate, as may enable a man to give up his account with joy? How many that have resolved to be rich (yea, and have been as good as their resolution) *have pierced themselves thorough with divers sorrows, yea been drowned in perdition*, 1 *Tim.*6.9. When *Jesurun waxed fat, he kicked, he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Deut.*32.15. What *Salomon* saith, *Prov.* 3.23,30. *Look not upon the Wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moves its self aright; at the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder*, may too often be applied to prosperity, which looks and tastes like sparkling wine, but oft times proves a stinging serpent. I doubt not but the time will come when many rich men will wish they had begd their bread, rather than to have had so heavie an account to give for abused prosperity.

Few men have received that hurt by their povertie that others have done by their plentie: as, for one that is starved to death, there are hun-

hundreds killed with surfeiting upon meates or drinks. Yea *adversity* hath its conveniencies and its good things, as well as prosperity its mixture of discommodities and evil things. As one said, *he had received some hurt by his graces* (which innate corruption had abused to pride) *and some good by his sins* (which God had taken occasion to humble him by, for so I understand him.) So have many received hurt by their prosperity, and good by their adversity: been losers by the former, been gainers by the latter. Many may take up the words of *Themistocles*, and say, *They had perished, if they had not perished.* They had been undone in one sense, if they had not been undone in another; or say as a *Philosopher*, I have read of, *They never made a better voyage than at that time when they suffered shipwrack.* *Solomon* knew what he said, *Eccles.* 7. 3. *Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.* Sweet things are commonly known to turn to choller (which is a bitter humour) and bitter things to cleanse and sweeten the blood. If then I may be better by my affliction, and might have been worse for my prosperity; why should I think my self undone for the loss of that which might have been my undoing? why should I stand and wonder at that passage, *James* 1. 10. *Let the rich man rejoyce in that he is made low.* Had not *Manasses* more cause to bless God for those Iron fetters, wherewith he was bound by his enemies, the *Assyrians*, than for his crown of Gold, 2 *Chron.* 33. 12. *When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord, &c.* Prosperity had been his worst enemy, and afterwards affliction under God became his great-

greateſt friend, did moſt befriend him, for it brought him home to God, and to himſelf. For when the Lord chaſtned him, then, and not till then did he open his eares, and ſeale his inſtruction. *Job* 33. 16, 19.

When I conſider theſe things, I cannot but break out and ſay: Lord never reſtore proſperity to me, unleſs thou wilt give me a heart to uſe it, yea I rather implore affliction, (whilſt need requires) ſo thou wilt but ſanctifie it. If my droſs may not otherwiſe be melted away, put me into thy Furnace, only when I am tried, let me come forth like gold.

DISCOURSE XXII.

Of the gracious ends and intendments of God in afflicting his people.

COuld we take any thing ill from God's hand if we did believe he meant well? would we receive with our left hand what we thought that God did offer us with his right? all thoſe things in which God hath good ends towards us muſt needs end in our good; for the Almighty cannot be fruſtrated. Our *Proverb* ſaith, *All is well that ends well*, why then ſhould we take on as if all thoſe things were againſt us, which ſhall in the event make for us and work together for our good? Wherefore did God *lead the Iſraelites about in the Wilderneſs 40. yeares together?* was it not meerly, *to humble them and prove them, and do them good in their latter end? Deut.* 8. 2, 16. God ſpeaking of debating with his people, *viz.* by

by correction, *Isa.* 27.8. saith, *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin*: *vers.* 9. And the *Apostle* saith *Heb.* 12. 10. That *God chastneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness.* To think that God would correct his children but for some good end, what is it but to think more hardly of God than we do of our selves, who use to say, but that we think it for their good, we would never strike a Childe whilst we lived, nor should it feel the weight of our finger. Is not God as unwilling to strike as you can be, if fair meanes would serve the turn? how shall I give thee up oh *Ephraim*, but either he must take such a course with us, or it will be worse for us. Even then when the meanes which God useth are the fruits of justice and displeasure, the end which he propoundeth in so doing, is the result of his mercy. Though the Husband-man break up the ground, plow upon its back, and make long furrowes, he intends no hurt, all is to prepare it for the seed. Whatsoever the face of Gods actions or actings towards his people may be, to be sure he hath alwayes good intentions as towards them, for *he is tender of them as of the apple of his eye*, *Zach.* 2.8. And give me leave to say there is a great deale more comfort in the good meanings of God than of men; because men may meane well, when yet they may do very ill: yea that very thing which they designed for much good, may do much hurt. The *Amalekite* that told *David* he had killed *Saul*, designed to get a reward for himself, 2 *Sam.* 1.2. but we see it cost him his life. But the designes of God cannot be defeated. *Prov.* 19.21. *The counsell of the Lord*

that

that ſhall ſtand. Job 23. 13. *He is of one minde, and who can turn him, and what his ſoul deſireth that he doth.* It is yet a further comfort that we may not only know in the general that God intends the good of his people in afflicting them, but alſo in particular that he intends our good thereby.

For *firſt* of all, If it be ſo that God hath created in us hungrings and thirſtings after a ſanctified uſe of our afflictions, ſo that we more long to be brought out of ſin by affliction, than to be brought out of affliction by deliverance: we may be confident, he that created thoſe hungrings and thirſtings after learning righteouſneſs by the judgments that are upon us, and obedience by our ſufferings, will ſatisfie them. *Mat.* 5. 6.

Moreover, If God hath given us a ſanctified uſe of mercies time after time, if mercies have done us good; afflictions ſhall do ſo likewiſe. We ſomtimes give our children delightful things, only to pleaſe them: but not diſtaſtful things, unleſs it be to profit them; neither will God do otherwiſe by his children.

Again, If afflictions actually do us good, and make us better, we may be ſure they were ſent of God for that end and purpoſe: for it is not by accident, but by divine appointment that evil things ſhould do us good; though it is true they may do us hurt thorough our own default, how be it God had made them capable of doing us good, if we had not abuſed them. We can bring evil out of good, and darkneſs out of light: but it is God only that can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkneſs. God ſometimes

ſends

ſends afflictions to do his enemies good, (as *Manaſſeh* for inſtance) and will he ſend them to do his friends hurt?

O Lord how uſual is it with us to double and treble our miſeries, by miſinterpreting the ends of God in inflicting them, as if thou didſt it only to wreak thine anger upon us, and to wreak thy wrath from heaven againſt us, as if thou didſt whet thy glittering ſword that thou mighteſt render vengeance, when yet *thou chaſteneſt us only as a Man chaſteneth his Son*, Deut. 8. 5. how oft do we think that thou haſt laid thy Axe to our Root, when it is but thy Pruning-hook to our ſuperfluous branches: Doth it not grieve thy ſpirit to be thus miſconſtrued and hardly thought of, as it would cut us to the heart to be miſtaken for enemies, when we have done and ſpoken as true friends? Lord open thy heart to us, as *Joſeph* opened his to his brethren, when after angry looks and threatnings, he comforted them with ſaying, I am your brother *Joſeph*, which before they knew not. Lord it ſhall ſuffice, let our troubles be what they will be, if we may but read thy love in them, and if thou wilt but ſay to us, as to thy people of old, *Jer.* 29. 11. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

DISCOURSE XXIII.

Of Reſignation to God, and acquieſcing in his good pleaſure.

HOw good is it to be willing to be at God's diſpoſe? how meet is it to be ſaid to God, not

not as I will, but as thou wilt? shall we pray (as *Christ* hath taught us) that the will of God may be done, and yet be impatient of Gods doing his own will? Is it fit that Gods will should take place or ours? who are we that we should set our selves to contradict and oppose the good pleasure of God, be it that our houses shall be fired, our goods burnt, our head City laid wast. Did *Abraham* withstand God when he bid him to sacrifice his dear *Isaac* (the heire of promise) with his own hand? Did he not, as to that, lie at Gods foot when he called him to it? Are we better than *Moses*, then *Aaron* the Saint of the Lord, than *David*, than *Hezekiah*, than *Job*, yea than *Christ* himself, who had all learn'd to stoop to God, in very difficult cases? Can we be too good to do it, if they were not? When God told *Moses* he should go up to *Pisgah*, and take a view of *Canaan*, but that he should never enter into it, *Deut.* 3. 27. We finde not one word that he replyed, after he had once made his request, and God had said, speak no more of this matter. When God had by fire consumed *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the two Sons of *Aaron*, *Moses* did but say to him, *The Lord will be sanctified in them that come nigh to him, and be glorified before all the people, and Aaron held his peace*, *Levit.* 10. 3. When old *Eli* had received a dreadfull message from God by a Child, for so *Samuel* then was, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. How meekly did he resent it, saying, *It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good.* When *David* was flying from the face of his rebellious Son *Absalom*, and taking leave of the Ark of God, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. *If the Lord say I have no delight in thee, behold here*

am

am I, let him do to me what ſeemeth him good? At another time, when *David* was even conſumed by the blow of Gods hand, *Pſal.* 39. 10. he ſaith, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. verſ.* 9. And as for *Hezekiah*, though a King alſo, (as well as *David*) yet ſee how his ſpirit buckled to God, when the Prophet brought him word, that God had taken away the fee-ſimple of all he had from his *children, who ſhould be Eunuches to the King of Babylon, Iſa.* 39. 7. And left him but his life in it. *Good is the Word of the Lord,* (ſaith he) *which thou haſt ſpoken, verſ.* 8. As for *Job* who had been the greateſt of all the Men of the Eaſt, when he had loſt all but a vexatious Wife, prompting him to curſe God, yet cried he out, *Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord, Job* 1. 21.

Behold a greater inſtance of patience and ſubmiſſion than any of theſe, both for that his perſon was more excellent, and his ſufferings far greater, having been a Man of ſorrowes all his time. *Iſa.* 53. 7. *He was oppreſſed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, brought as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a Sheep before the Shearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth. When he was reviled he reviled not again: when he ſuffered he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. Was not this written for our imitation? *verſ.* 21. *Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example.* Did he, who is God equal with the father, ſubmit even to the painfull, and ſhamefull, and curſed death of the croſs, and ſhall we think our ſelves too good to ſtoop to leſſer ſufferings and humiliations? he that can ſubmit to God, may be happy in any condition:

he

he that cannot, will be happy in no condition this World can afford him, in which all our roſes are full of prickles, and all our wayes ſtrowed and hedged up with thornes, more or leſs. Yea not only the Church militant upon Earth, but even the Church triumphant, in heaven, could not be free from miſery, if the will of glorious Saints were not melted into the will of God. *Abraham* would be ever and anon grieving to think of *Dives* and others in his caſe, if his will were not perfectly conformed to the will of God. Many things fall out in this life, which we would not for a World ſhould be, if we could and might prevent them; but when the pleaſure of God is once declared by events, even in thoſe caſes ought we to ſit down ſatisfied. *Abraham* would not have ſacrificed *Iſaac* for the whole World, but that God made as if he would have him ſo to do, and then he yielded preſently. If blinde fortune did govern the World, whoſe heart would it not break to think of ſo famous a City in a few dayes laid in aſhes: but ſith it was the will of God it ſhould be ſo, who ordereth all things according to the counſel of his will, let all the Earth be ſilent before him, let us be ſtill and know that he is God. Who ſhould rule the World but he that made it, and that upholds it by the Word of his Power? He can do us no wrong if he would, ſuch is his eſſential holineſs, (which alſo makes it impoſſible for him to lie) he would do us no wrong if he could, ſuch is his infinite juſtice. He can do nothing but what is conſiſtent with infinite wiſdome, patience, goodneſs, mercy, and every perfection, and how unreaſonable is it not to ſubmit to that which is con-

conſiſtent with all of theſe? ſo doubtleſs was the burning of our renowned City (as ghaſtly a ſpectacle as it is to behold) elſe it had never come to paſs.

O Lord I am ſenſible that I have need of line upon line, precept upon precept, and example upon example, to teach me this hard leſſon of ſubmiſſion to thee (though the object of that ſubmiſſion ſeem to be only my condition in this life) for I no where finde that thou requireſt me and others to be willing to periſh everlaſtingly) Thou knoweſt how much thy glory and the comfort of thy poor Creatures are concerned in it, that we ſhould know how to reſign up our ſelves to thee; inable us to be contented with whatſoever thy will hath been or ſhall be concerning us, and then be pleaſed to do with us (as to this World) what thou wilt.

DISCOURSE. XXIV.

Of taking occaſion by this, to ſtudy the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly things.

IF a glorious City turned into a ruinous heap in four dayes time, when no viſible enemy was at hand to do it: if the reducing hundreds of Families to almoſt beggery, that liv'd in good faſhion in leſs than one week before, by an unexpected meanes, and in a way not poſſible to be foreſeen: if knocking a Nation out of joynt all of a ſudden (like a body that had been tortured upon a Rack) be not loud Sermons of the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly things, ſurely

there will be none ſuch till that time ſhall come, that St. *Peter* ſpeaks of, 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *When the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the Earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.* What a Comment was this providence upon that Text, *Pſal.* 39. 5. *Verily every Man at his beſt ſtate is altogether vanity?* How did it evince the *Pſalmiſt* to ſpeak right, *Pſal.* 62. 9. Not only when he ſaith, *Men of low degree are vanity*, (which moſt people do believe) but alſo when he ſaith, *Men of high degree are a lie, to be laid in the ballance they are altogether lighter than vanity* (which few aſſent unto.) If things are called vanity (as moſt properly they are) from their aptneſs, to vaniſh and diſappear, from their taking wings and flying away from us: then ſurely the vaniſhing and flying away of a famous City upon the wings of the fire, and of the wind, (which were the bellowes inraging that fire) are a great argument of the vanity of all things here below.

Amongſt all ſublunary things, what could be thought to have more ſtability and certainty in it than the City of *London* had, as to the body and bulk of it? elſe why were ſo many wiſe men willing to venture all they had in the world in that one bottome? Moſt men dreampt as little of the burning of all, or the moſt of *London*, as of burning up the whole World before the day of Judgment: and it is like did think it not only improbable, but upon the matter impoſſible, as not doubting, but if fire did happen in any part of the City, one or more, there would be men and meanes enough to extinguiſh it (as they uſe to do) This Mountain was thought to ſtand

ſo

ſo ſtrong, as that it could not be removed in ſuch a way as it was. He that had ſaid, but what if the whole City ſhould be burnt? would have been anſwered by moſt men, with the Proverb, *what if the skie ſhould fall?* yet have we ſeen this *famous City* wither like *Jonah's Gourd*, though not in one day, yet in a very few. May we not apply to it thoſe words of *David*, uſed in another caſe, we have lately ſeen it in great power, ſpreading it ſelf like a green Bay Tree: we paſſed by, and loe it was not, we ſought it, and it could not be found. *Pſal.* 37. 35. Who can but think of the *Pſalmiſt*'s expreſſions upon this occaſion, *Pſal.* 74. 5. *A man was famous according as he had lifted up Axes upon the thick Trees*, (*viz.* in order to building the Temple: ſo likewiſe to build the City, or any part of it) *but now they break down the carved work thereof with Axes and Hammers*: ſuch execution hath the Fire done, that greater could not have been done, nor yet ſo great by Axes and Hammers, and *verſ.* 7. and 8. *They have caſt Fire into the Sanctuary, they have burnt up the Synagogues of God in the Land.* We read of *Sodom*'s being *overthrown in a moment and no hands ſtayed on her*, *Lam.* 4. 6. Was it not ſo with *London*? Is any Man's life ſo certain as the continuance of *London* was thought to be? Who did not expect that both he and his ſhould have been in their Graves before *London* had come to lie in aſhes? who thought not that the City, which had ſurvived many ages paſt, would alſo have ſurvived many ages to come? who would not have thought that a Leaſe for ſo long as *London* ſhould ſtand, had been more durable than if it had run for the lives of a hundred men?

yet even in it have we ſeen thoſe words fulfilled, *Iſa.* 40. 6. *All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the Field. Pſal.* 90. 6. *In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withered.*

But may ſome ſay, *Land* is certain, though houſes be caſual; neither can moth eat it, nor ruſt corrupt it, nor theeves ſteale it, nor yet fire conſume it; for that matter, all that can be ſaid, Land is like to ſtand where it is, but that it will alwayes abide by the preſent and proper owners of it, that is as uncertain as any thing elſe. If *Ahab* have a minde to *Naboth*'s Vineyard, *Jezabel* knowes how to get it for him, though *Naboth* would not part with it. It is but paper and parchment that men have to ſhow for their Lands, and are not they more eaſily conſumed than a whole City: or may they not be loſt or ſtollen, or ſo baffled by the artifice of corrupt Lawyers, that they ſhall do us no good? we ſee then that which was lookt upon by all men to be as great a certainty as this World hath any, is dried up like a deceitfull Brook in Summer. *Job* 6. 17.

O Lord, when I remember theſe things, I cannot but pour out my ſoul in me, and my ſupplication unto thee, ſaying, O Lord, give me not my portion in theſe things, which may ſo eaſily be taken away, ſuffer me not to ſet my heart upon things, of which it is ſaid, they are not, becauſe they take wings & flie away, but give me to inherit durable ſubſtance, (or that which *is*, as thou haſt called it, Heb. *teſh. Prov.*) Fire me out of the love of the World, by what thou haſt done to the City, and give me to minde what thou

thou haſt ſaid, 1 *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world, for the world paſſeth away, &c.* Give me to conſider how miſerable I am, if I have intereſt in no good things, but thoſe which one nights fire, or one daies trial at law may take away from me? I ſee we are all tenants at will, as to all we have in this world, and thou ſealeſt a leaſe of ejectment when thou pleaſeſt: but there is an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reſerved for thy people in the heavens. Oh give us here an abundant entrance into it, and hereafter the endleſs poſſeſſion of it. And as experience ſheweth us the vanity of all things here below, let us by means of faith, which is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and evidence of things not ſeen, foreſee the reality, and in part fore-enjoy the ſweetneſs of thoſe better things that are above.

DISCOURSE XXV.

Of not being too eager upon the world, after this great loſs.

I Am jealous over ſome men (pardon me, a godly jealouſie) leſt they ſhould verefie that *Proverb*, which ſaith, that *Faſting from two meales, makes the third a glutton.* Trading hath been twice interrupted of late; once by the Plague, and ſince by the Fire; and now it is much to be feared leſt men ſhould fall too eagerly to it again, like thoſe that having been al-

moſt ſtarved, when they come at meat again, are apt to ſurfeit. Now God hath burnt your former houſes, take heed of burning your own fingers, in hiring new ones at too great Fines and Rents. Remember the words of God to *Baruch*, *Jer.* 45. 4. *Behold that which I have built will I break down; and ſeekeſt thou great things for thy ſelf?* See the world better before you have more to do with it than you needs muſt; Children that draw a breaſt too hard, that hath but little in it, what do they but fill themſelves with wind? Truſt not your ſelves too far with the world, for it is a ſlippery thing, and may ſerve you ſuch another trick: who would toile, and in the Fire, to lay up treaſure for another Fire to conſume? Ought *they that have wives* (and not much more they that have trades) *to be as though they had none?* 1 *Cor.* 7. 30. *Becauſe the faſhion of the world paſſeth away.* A moderate care to recruit ſome part of our loſſes is not to be blamed: but an immoderate, will do more hurt than good. *They that will be rich* (be it after great loſſes) *fall into temptation and a ſnare*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. It is not for us to ſay we will be rich, then of all times, when God hath ſaid in effect that he will have us poor: though wait upon his providence we may and muſt, for a convenient ſubſiſtance.

O Lord, thou haſt given us fair warning not to ſet our hearts upon this world, or flie too faſt after that which flies ſo faſt away from us. Sin and the world are two enemies we are not bound to love; yea, we are bound not to love the firſt at all, the laſt, much. Seeing it is the pleaſure of God to take the world from us, let us take off our hearts from it. If God withdraw

ſpiritual

ſpiritual mercies, it is to make us purſue them more eagerly; but if he withdraw temporal, it is that we ſhould proſecute them more indifferently. It being one of thy deſigns, O Lord, in taking part of this world from us, to make us mind this leſs, and the next, more; far be it from us upon that account to minde this world more, and that which is to come, leſs; or to rob our general calling, to recruit our particular; when we ſhould rather borrow time from our particular callings which thou haſt diminiſhed, to add to our general. *O Lord*, teach us neither to deal with a ſlack hand (which thou haſt ſaid, tends to poverty) not yet to be ſo hot upon it, as if we were reſolved by the fire of our zeal for the world, certainly to repair what thou haſt impaired by the fire of thine anger: but give us rather to ſtudy how contentedly and comfortably we may live for leſs, than how we may regain and repoſſeſs as much as ever.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

Of chuſing rather to continue under affliction, than to eſcape by ſin.

IT is the greateſt miſery that attends a ſuffering condition, that it tempts men to ſeek a deliverance by ſin. *Agur* gives this reaſon why he deprecated poverty, *Prov.* 30. 9. *Leſt* (ſaith he) *I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of the Lord in vain.* Even Theft its ſelf is a taking of Gods name in vain, as being a practical denying of Gods alſufficiency to provide for us, with-

out the interpoſition of our ſin, and thereunto are men tempted by extream poverty. It were eaſie to recount many indirect courſes which are taken by men and women, utterly to defend themſelves againſt want. Some betake themſelves to unlawful trades, no leſs than proſtituting their own bodies, or the bodies of others, therewith to provide for their backs and bellies; ſome have other trades as bad as that (if ſo bad can be;) others uſe lawful callings unlawfully, vending bad commodities, taking unconſcionable rates, pinching thoſe poor people that work to them. Some go the way of open violence, (as by robbery, extortion, oppreſſion,) others the no leſs diſhoneſt way, of ſecret fraud and couſenage, Some are tempted to break, not becauſe they cannot pay their debts and live: but becauſe they cannot live ſo as they were wont to do if they ſhould pay their debts, and therefore they will rather defraud their Creditors, than their *Genius*. Some, if God take away from them but ſome part of what he hath given them, reſolve to lend him nothing (in that ſenſe as they who give to the poor, are ſaid to lend to the Lord) not but that they are more able than ſome others who are careful to maintain good works, and to be very charitable: but becauſe they are not ſo able as they have been; as who ſhould ſay, if God impair his wonted bounty towards them, (though much of his bounty be ſtill extended towards them, howbeit not ſo much as formerly) they will put an imbargo upon all their charity, nothing ſhall go out to the poor, if there come not into them ſo much as formerly. It

ſounds

ſounds like taking ſome kind of revenge upon God himſelf.

I wiſh the words of *David*, *Pſal.* 10. 9. were not applicable to many, where ſpeaking of a wicked man, he ſaith, *He lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net.* Are there not many that work upon the neceſſities of poor men, and grinde their faces when they have them at an advantage? Theſe are ſome of the ill methods and artifices whereby too many attempt to make up their loſſes. But better it were to be alwaies poor, than to grow rich by ſuch waies as theſe. Where ſin is made uſe of as the cure of Affliction, the remedy is worſe than the diſeaſe, and it is as our *Proverb* ſpeaks, *Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire.* Deliverance obtained by ſin is like *Jacob's* bleſſing procured by lying, which was many waies imbittered to him: For none of all the *Patriarchs* had ſo many croſſes as he. Sin is a worſe labyrinth than affliction: worſe to ſtay in, and worſe to get out of. So *David* found it when he would have concealed his ſhame in the matter of *Bathſhebah* by making *Uriah* drunk, that would not do his buſineſs, neither did he ſee how he could effect his deſign without killing him: and when that was done, he was in a worſe caſe than ever; for then watered he his couch with his tears, then were his bones broken. So *Peter* thought to have ſecured himſelf, by denying his maſter: but that denying coſt him dearer than it is probable his owning of Chriſt at that time would have done. All that men truly get by ſin, they may put in their eyes (as we ſay) and not ſee the worſe. What had become

become of *Job* if he had followed the wicked counsel which his wife gave him, whereby to put an end to his troubles? saying, *Curse God and die.*

Let those that are tempted to repair their losses by indirect means, think but of three Texts. The first is, *Prov.* 21. 6. *The getting of treasure by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.* The next is, *Prov.* 22. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor to encrease his riches, shall surely come to want.* The last is, *Jer.* 17. 11. *As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his daies, and at his end shall be a fool.* But as for those that chuse rather to suffer than to sin, God taketh a particular care of them: witness *Daniel*, preserved in the Lions den; and the three children in the fiery furnace. They that sin under sufferings, what do they but take in more lading in a storm, whereas the usual and best way is, to cast out part of that lading which they had taken in before.

O Lord, I desire to depend upon this, that thou knowest how to deliver the righteous out of temptations; and that without their unrighteousness. Let not the lot of the wicked so long rest upon the backs of thy servants, as to make them put forth their hands to wickedness. Cause us to believe, that thy blessing only so maketh rich, as to add no sorrow therewith. and let us never forget or misdoubt what thou saidst to thy servant *Abraham*, I am God all-sufficient, walk thou before me and be upright. Doubtless a little which a righteous man hath

is

is better than great treaſures of the wicked. Let me ever be perſwaded (as I hope I now am) that innocent poverty is much more elegible than ill gotten proſperity.

DISCOURSE XXVII.

Of preparing for our own diſſolution, now we have ſeen the deſtruction of London.

O *London*, art thou gone before us? who thought to have ſeen thee in aſhes firſt? who thought that the ſtakes of his Tabernacle would not be removed, and the cords thereof looſned, whilſt thou wert left ſtanding like a ſtrong tower not eaſie to be demoliſhed, and as like as any thing to endure till time its ſelf ſhall be no more? How much leſs difficult had it been for a burning feaver to have conſumed me (and thouſands more ſuch as I am) than for ſuch a fire, as did that work to have conſum'd *London*? For *is my ſtrength the ſtrength of ſtones? or is my fleſh of braſs?* as *Job* ſpeaks, *chap.* 6. 12. Such was the ſtrength of that *City*, and yet ſee where it lieth. As for *London* its ſelf, it was a glorious *City*, beautiful for ſcituation, and I had almoſt called it the joy of the whole earth, alluding to what was ſaid of Mount *Sion*, *Pſal.* 48. 2. (to be ſure the joy of the three Kingdoms) but the inhabitants of *London*, as to their bodies, what were they but dwellers in houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, which might be cruſht before the moth? *Job* 4. 19. Who look not upon

ſtrong

ſtrong-built houſes as things more durable than their inhabitants? who did not hope if they were their own, to tranſmit them to their children, and childrens children to many generations? And yet we ſee that they are in the duſt before us. And is not that a fair warning to us, as it might be to an aged infirm perſon, to follow a young luſtie perſon to the grave. If this were done to the green tree, what may not the dry expect? If the beſt houſes in *London* were half a year ſince not really worth three years purchaſe, how ever men did value them, how ſmall a purchaſe may our lives be worth for ought we know? Many might reckon to lay their ruins (their carcaſſes I mean) in the bowels of *London*, but who ever thought to have had his carcaſs interred in the ruins of *London*? as ſome have had already. A little time hath produced a greater change than our great change would be, why then ſhould we put the evil day of death far off? why ſhould we promiſe our ſelves length of daies, as if the preſent year might not put a period to us, as well as to a ſtrong and ſtately City, that was likely to have out-laſted a thouſand of us.

How reaſonable is it then for us whoſe lives are but a vapor, to expect but a ſhort continuance in this world, at leaſtwiſe not to expect any long duration here; to ſay with the *Apoſtle*, *The time is ſhort*. Yea, how needful is it we ſhould take the counſel which *Chriſt* gives, *Luke* 12.35. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, And your ſelves like men that wait for the Lord, that when he knocketh they may open to him immediately*. As there is no preparing for death with-

without thinking of it, ſo who can think of death, and not deſire to prepare for it? if the deſtruction of *London* admoniſh us to number our dayes, it doth no leſs, to apply our hearts to wiſdome. Who would be willing to die unpreparedly, that thinks at all of dying?

That you may know what I mean by preparedneſs for death, take this account. Then is a man fit to die, when he is in a condition to die both ſafely and comfortably: when he is tranſlated from ſpiritual death to life, and knowes himſelf ſo to be. He that is not ſo tranſlated, hath no fitneſs at all to die, he that is and knows it not, is fit in one ſenſe, and unfit in another: is partly fit, but not ſo compleatly, but he that both is ſo, and knows himſelf to be ſo, hath all the eſſentials of fitneſs for death, though if a man be in the actual exerciſe of grace and diſcharge of his duty, it muſt be confeſſed that doth give him ſomewhat more of an actual and accompliſhed fitneſs, than the meer habits of grace and of aſſurance can do. He that hath made his calling and election ſure, he that is ſealed up to the day of redemption by the ſpirit of promiſe, he that can ſay with *Paul*, he knows in whom he hath truſted, and as St. *John*, we know that we are of God; I ſay is fit to die. He that hath not that fitneſs for death, but yet deſires to have it, let him make it part of every daies work to get it; let him be daily learning how to die. Hath God afforded no meanes whereby to bring us to a fitneſs for death? what is prayer, reading the Scriptures, hearing the word, converſe with Chriſtians, examining our ſelves, ſerious meditation of ſpiritual and eternal

things,

things, avoiding the occaſions of evil, keeping our hearts with all diligence? Is it likely that a man ſhould conſcionably uſe all theſe meanes, and not attain the end of them? why then is faith ſaid to come by hearing the word preached? why is the word called the miniſtration of the ſpirit? why ſaith *Paul* to the *Galathians*, *Received ye not the ſpirit by the hearing of faith? Gal.* 3. 2. why did *Chriſt* counſel men to ſearch the Scriptures, ſeeming to approve their thinking, that in them we have eternal life? why doth *Chriſt* ſpeak of our heavenly father, giving his ſpirit to them that ask him? why doth he ſay, *Ask and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall finde, knock and it ſhall be opened to you, Mat.* 7. 7. *For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that ſeeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened, verſ.* 8. why muſt all that come to God, believe that God is a rewarder of all them that ſeek him diligently? *Heb.* 11. 6. It ſeems to conſiſt but ill with ſuch texts as theſe, for us to look upon the means which God hath appointed as inſignificant and ineffectual. And ſeeing they are not ſo, let us diligently uſe them in order to our preparation for death, now at leaſtwiſe that God hath ſpared us ſo long as to ſee *London* laid in the duſt before us.

Now God hath fired your neſts over your heads (*dear friends and much lamented Citizens*) will not each of you ſay as *David*, *Pſal.* 55. 6. *O that I had wings like a* Dove (which is the embleme of innocency) *for then would I flie away, and be at reſt.* I ſee no great reaſon we now have to be fond of life, if we were but fit to die. May we not ſay with *Solomon*, we have ſeen an end of all perfection? Seeing we have brought forth an

Icabod

Icabod (ſo far as concernes our ſelves only, and in reference to this World) what great matter had it been, if with *Eli*'s daughter in Law we had died in Childbed? Now who would not long to be diſſolved, as *Paul* did, if he could but ſay with him, *We know if our Earthly Houſe were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

O ſee then as concerning Death, there are three leſſons to be learnt from this ſad providence, *viz.* to expect it, to prepare for it, and to be willing to it. To expect it, is the way to prepare for it: and when once prepared for it, we have no great reaſon, after ſuch a deſolation, to be unwilling to it.

O Lord I dare not ſay, as *Elijah* did, 1 *Kings* 19. 4. *It is enough, take away my life.* He might better ſay ſo than I. Poſſibly he foreſaw by a ſpirit of propheſie, that fiery Chariot which was intended to carry him to heaven. 2 *Kings* 2. 12. Yet neither he nor I may ſay ſo by way of diſcontent. O *Lord*, I have many things to deſire, as in reference to death, let me not die till I am willing, make me willing when I am fit, let me know I am fit, when I am really ſo, that I may be willing, make me early fit, that I may be timely willing: yea deſirous to be diſſolved, and whenſoever I am deſirous to dye, let me alſo be contented to live, if thou have any work to do for me. Let me only deſire that thou maiſt be glorified in me, whether by life or death. *Lord* what work do I and ſome others make of dying, as if it were more for us to die, than for *London* to be burnt to aſhes. Did *Aaron* make any ſuch ſtir about it? Up he went to Mount *Hor*. *Moſes*

ſtript

ſtript him of his Garments, and put them upon Eleazar his Son: Numb. 20. 26. And me thinks he made no more of it, than if he had put off his cloaths to go to Bed, or than if with *Enoch*, he had been about to have been tranſlated, rather than to have ſeen death; or with *Chriſt* after his reſurrection, rather about to aſcend than to die. O *Lord* have not ſome of thy ſervants known the time of their approaching Death, and knowing it, called their friends about them, prayed together, ſung Pſalmes together, chearfully conſer'd about that better world they were going to, took their ſolemn leave of all their relations and friends, as if they had only been about to travel into ſome far Country, from whence they were never like to return again, and then compoſed themſelves to die, as if they had only laid themſelves to ſleep, and commended their ſouls into thy hands with no leſs chearfulneſs and confidence, than Men do their bags and bonds into the hands of faithful friends? May I not (with ſubmiſſion) deſire to die upon the ſame termes? yet, if it may ſtand with thy bleſſed will, let me live to ſee *London* rebuilt in ſome competent meaſure: thy people re-united: *England* reſetled: Proteſtant Nations reconciled each to other: thy Goſpel every where ſpread: this Land a Mountain of holineſs, and a valley of viſion, or if not all, yea if none of theſe, at leaſtwiſe clearly to ſee and read my own name written in the book of life: then ſhall I ſay with good old *Simeon*, *Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.*

FINIS.